Am. Irish tracts, 1640-1660

Christian Concord:

OR THE

AGREEMENT

of the Associated

PASTORS and CHURCHES

OF

WORCESTERSHIRE.

WITH

Rich. Baxter's Explication and Defence of it, and his Exhortation to Unity.

ROM. 12. 4, 5.

For as we have many Members in one Body, and all Members have not the same Office: so we being Many are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another.

JUDE Ver. 19.

These be they who separate themselves, sensuall, having not the Spirit.

LONDON,

Printed by *A. & M.* for *Thomas Underhill*, at the Anchor and Bible in Paul's Church-yard neer the little North-door, and *Francis Tyton* at the three Daggers in Fleet-street neer *Dunstans* Church. 1653.

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ROM. 14. 17, 18, 19.

For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and joy in the holy Ghoſt.

For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for Peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another.

PHIL. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4.

If there be therefore any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels, and mercies;

Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, of one minde.

Let nothing be done through ſtrife or vainglory, but in lowlineſs of minde let each eſteem other better then themſelves.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others.

ROM. 15. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7.

We then that are ſtrong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe our ſelves.

Let every one of us pleaſe his Neighbour for his good to edification.

Now the God of patience and conſolation grant you to be like minded one towards another, according to Chriſt Jeſus.

That ye may with one minde and one mouth, glorifie God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Wherefore receive ye one another, as Chriſt alſo received us, to the glory of God.

EPHES. 4. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

With all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long ſuffering, forbearing one another in love.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one ſpirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

One Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſme,

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

PSAL. 133. 1.

Behold how good and how pleasant it is; for brethren to dwell together in unity.

JOH. 17. 21, 22, 23.

That they may all be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may beleeve that thou hast sent me.

And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

1 COR. 1. 10.

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same minde, and in the same judgement.

The

THE PROPOSITIONS

Agreed on by the

Associated Ministers

of the County of

WORCESTER,

and some adjacent Parts.

We Ministers of the Gospel whose Names are underwritten, after our seeking of Gods direction, and our most serious consultations about the discharge of our Duty, for the Reforming and right Guiding of the Congregations committed to our charge, and for the right Managing of Gods Worship therein; Do Agree and Resolve as followeth:

I. IN general, We do Agree and Resolve, not to addict or engage our selves to any Party, nor to set up the Dictates of any as such, but at present only to Practise unanimously those known Truths which the sober and godly of each Party are agreed in, as near as possibly we can, that so we may neither give occasion to any such sober and godly persons to divide from us; nor yet proceed ungroundedly, doubtingly, and uncomfortably in our Work, nor attempt any thing but what we know to be of God, and may

chearfully bear all labour, and sufferings that we may meet with in carrying it on.

II. We agree, and resolve by Gods help, That so far as God doth make known our duty to us, we will faithfully endeavour to discharge it, and will not desist through any fears of losses in our Estates, or the frowns and displeasure of men, or any the like Carnal inducements whatsoever.

III. Particularly, We are all convinced that it is the duty of each Minister to endeavour to know (if possible) each person of his charge, that so he may know where his special duty lieth, and how to perform it.

IV. We are also convinced, That it is the duty of Ministers and people, according to their several opportunities, to admonish and reprove those that live in any known sin, through wilfulnesse or negligence (laying aside the ordinary infirmities that the most godly are subject to) and this must be with tender love, and yet with great seriousnesse, and with discretion; and not with malice, bitternesse, or disdain, yet variously according to the quality of the person and offence. And if the offender hear not, that is, obey not the admonition, by Repenting and Reforming, he must be admonished before witnesse; This therefore we Resolve by Gods assistance faithfully to practise according to our opportunitie, and to acquaint our people with their duty herein, especially in great Congregations, where through the greatnesse and multitude of other works, lesse of this can be expected from Ministers.

V. If any after this admonition shall yet refuse to Repent and Reform, those that can prove it, must tell the Church-Officers, who must hear the case, and admonish them with Authority. The like must be done by those that have been oft admonished by others formerly, and not Repented and Reformed; and those whose sin is notorious, and hainously scandalous. But for private persons to accuse others in the publick Congregation before the Officers have heard the case, may breed dangerous slanders and quarrels: We Resolve

solve therefore to appoint some certain times for the hearing of such cases.

VI. In Corporations, or other places that have Magistrates, We judge it convenient, if we can so far prevail with them, that they would grant us their presence at these meetings, both to be witnesses of our right proceedings, and to countenance them so far as by Law they may; and especially because it is necessary that they have the full cognisance of our proceedings, before we can expect they should assist us against any that will violently intrude into our communion or disturb us: and also that they may at the same time first censure offenders according to Law, and so we may know their proof of the fact; yet do we judge their presence a matter rather of conveniencie then of necessity.

VII. If any after this refuse to Repent and Reform, or if any have sinned hainously with publick scandal of the Church, it is the duty of Ministers to rebuke such before all the Church, and to call them publickly to repentance: This therefore we are resolved in both these cases to practise.

VIII. Yet, where any mans sin is such, as to expose him by the Law of the Land to death, or imprisonment, or great mulcts, or other penalties; We resolve not to anticipate publick Justice, nor to call out such to accuse themselves by their Church confessions, but shall wait to see what Justice will do with them: but after mulcts and corporal penalties imposed by Justice upon proof of guilt, we may and must require open repentance, if the person do survive.

IX. We Resolve (that we wrong not others or our selves) not to mention any mans sin publickly (by this personal application) before we have full proof beyond all exception, both of the fact and the faultiness, and not to traduce men in doubtful or controverted cases; and most commonly we must have the parties own confession of the matter of fact.

X. If

X. If after this publick admonition the sinner shall obstinately refuse to manifest Repentance, or to Reform; it is the duty of the Ministers to make a personal application to him of those threatnings which Christ hath denounced in Scripture against such as he is; and especially to declare in the Name of Christ, that he is one whose communion the Church is bound to avoid; and to require him to forbear usurping that communion, and to charge the Church in Christs Name to avoid all familiarity with him, not only in Gods Worship, but in common conversation, further then natural and civil relations binde us.

XI. When the Church or Officers are orderly acquainted that any man is obstinate in sin, after private and lesse publick admonition, or that his sin is notorious, and of publick scandal, it is unmeet to admit him to publick communion at the Lords Supper while he is under just tryall; for while the Church is necessarily in doubt whether he be such a scandalous or obstinate sinner or not, and so whether they may lawfully communicate with him or not (being forbidden communion with such) they must needs forbear his communion for that time (till his clearing or Repentance resolve their doubt) or else they must act doubtingly and not in Faith: Yet this is only a suspension of actual communion at present (no duty being a duty at all times to be performed) and not a proper denial of his right till he be cast out. The trial of his justly questioned right, will not fitly consist with his actual, full, and present exercise and use of such priviledges.

XII. We are all agreed likewise, That where men are thus notoriously scandalous, or obstinate in known sin, we may not content our selves with a meer debarring such from the Lords Supper (which mulitudes do willingly forbear of themselves, who yet are taken for as good Christians as others, and not avoided in regard of any other communion) but we must proceed to the forementioned publick reproof, and casting

ing them out of our communion, and their remaining members of our Church will harden themselves, offend the godly, occasion the weak to separate, and will be a scandal to our Profession, and an offence of God: We resolve therefore to discharge the foresaid duties in faithfulnesse, as God shall enable us.

XIII. It must not be a slight, unwilling, meer verbal Repentance that must satisfie the Church, either for preventing or taking off a Censure of casting out, but only such as seemeth free and serious, answerable in some measure to the quality of the fault. Such therefore we Resolve to require and expect that we delude not mens souls, and provoke not God by making a formality or Jest of his Ordinances.

XIV. If after once or twice scandalous or obstinate sinning, a man do once and again professe a serious Repentance, we shall admit him to Communion: But if after oft professing of Repentance he return again to wilful or scandalous sinning, we shall delay his re-admission till his actual Reformation do manifest the truth of his Repentance, else Gods Ordinances will be frustrated by illusion: Yet cannot we punctually resolve just how oft such mens professions alone may be taken as satisfactory, nor just how long we must delay his re-admission, if he forbear sinning, seeing these are to be varied according to the qualitie of the sin, and the seeming seriousnesse of Repentance, and therefore must be prudentially determined, when the individual Case with its circumstances is considered.

XV. Though the people have not Ministerial or governing power, yet they are to have a judgement of discretion, and thereby to try and discern, whether they that do cast out, or Absolve by Ministerial Authoritative Declaration, do proceed according to Gods word or not, and are not to obey any sentence or injunction that is contrary to that word; yet must they not on that pretence disobey or refuse to execute such injunctions and Censures without manifesting their proofs of its Error.

XVI. If people [illegible] familiarity with such as are publickly [illegible] they are to be dealt with by admonition, as in case of other sins. But if it should be a greater part of the Church that shall obstinately after admonition own and maintain a notorious scandalous sinner in his sin; or so far professe communion with him, that they make his sin their own, and continue obstinate therein, the rest of the Church are not only bound nevertheless to shun communion with the offender, but with them that so adhere to him, provided that it be not about lesser sins, or in a disputable doubtfull case, wherein they want full evidence against the offender: Yet do we agree for the avoiding of several dangerous consequents, before we attempt this work, to acquaint our Brethren of that Association, and hear their Judgements.

XVII. It having been the custom of the Church in the Apostles daies, to have ordinarily many Officers in a Church, and the private part of the Ministerial duty being so exceeding great, and of indispensable necessity where it can be performed, and also because it is lesse satisfactory and convenient for one Minister alone to try cases, where more may be had; We therefore judge it needfull to use all lawfull means to procure more Ministers or Elders then one in each Church, even proportionable to the number of Souls, and greatnesse of the work; and if for want of men or maintenance, there cannot Learned men be obtained, We judge it fit to take the assistance of sober Orthodox judicious persons of competent ability for private instruction and over-sight, and ordained to this work, though defective in learning, and lesse able publickly to Teach, and who may leave publick speaking to him that is more able, and do the more of the lesse publick work; and that such if other maintenance be wanting, may lawfully and fitly labour with their hands: And as long as we agree that these Elders are ordained Church-Officers, and what shall be their work, there needs to be no breach among us, though we determine not of their power in Sacraments,

ments, and [illegible] with the Teaching Elders: [illegible] Practice, we may leave mens several principals in such a difficult controverted point to their own judgements: Also we conceive it meet that where there are fit men, some be ordained to the Office of Deacons.

XVIII. Because all this forementioned Discipline cannot be exercised without the peoples consent (the Ministerial power being not compulsive, as by violence, but Nunciative, Swasory, and directive) and we have at present no full discovery of their consent: And because Ministers should have a particular knowledge of their Charge, which now is uncertain, and for divers other Reasons propounded and debated among us, we judge it very fit, if not of necessity, to desire a more expresse signification of our peoples consent to our Ministry, and Ministerial actions; and in particular to submit to this Discipline, as the members of that particular Church: And because we have reason to suspect that many among us understand not, or believe not the very fundamentals Essential to the Christian Faith; We judge it fit withall to require an understanding profession of Assent and Consent to such fundamentals, except any of us should judge that we can better exercise the forementioned Discipline without calling their people to such a profession of consent, in which case we will declare our Reasons to our Brethren of the Ministry in our meetings, and hear their advice when the case is opened.

XIX. In requiring this expresse consent, We agree to proceed according to these following Rules.

Reg. 1. We will first instruct our people in divers Sermons about the Nature of a Church, its constitution and government, the duty and Authority of Pastors, and the duties of people to God, their Ministers, and to each other as members of such a Church, and the meaning of each branch of that Profession which we call them to, that so they may not do it rashly, ignorantly, or formally.

R. 2. We shall as [illegible] draw up, and agree upon a form of words concerning the said Profession, with a brief Preface concerning the reasons, nature, and ends of it; and we will all use the same form of words to a word, except any Brother shall think himself bound to differ in any smaller point, where a difference is tollerable; in which case we will give in our reasons at the meeting of our Brethren of the Ministry, and hear their advise.

R. 3. We shall take these Professions only in publick, and not secretly.

R. 4. We shall deliver to our people a Copy of this form of Profession that they may consider of it before they are called to it.

R. 5. We shall first receive the Profession of all them that are satisfied and most willing, and wait till the rest are satisfied and will freely consent, and not spur them on to do it ignorantly, rashly or unwillingly.

R. 6. If any deny or delay to expresse their consent, We shall endeavour carefully to discern on what grounds he doth it, and whether it be a flat denial of the matter, or only some scruple at the manner, and accordingly shall distinguish between, 1. Professors of Consent, as being members certain. 2. Or deniers of consent as to the matter, as being no members of that Church: 3. And delayers or deniers to consent to the manner, as being uncertain, or lesse certain, whether they are members or no, till they further discover it.

R. 7. We shall distinguish between Infant-members, and Adult. and for the former we shall take their Parents profession, and for the latter we shall expect their own: And though it cannot be determined just to a day or year when any is past his Infant-Church-Estate, yet none must be enrolled or accounted among Adult. and perfect members, til they personally and publickly shall make their profession; whether it be only of their Faith and Obedience to Christ, that they may be esteemed Adult. members of the Universall Church,

or

or also their children to the priviledges of a particular Church.

R. 8. If any at full age do offer their Consent to be members of a particular Church, and expect to enjoy its priviledges, who yet understand not, or believe not the fundamental Essential points of the Christian Religion, if they be willing to learn, we shall presently instruct them as *Catecumeni*, and admit them when they are fit: But if they refuse to learn, we must take them for such as refuse to be Christians; and therfore where we have just reason to suspect the ignorance or unbelief of any that offer their profession of the form of words. We judge it our duty more particularly to examine them, yet resolve that we will not refuse any for want of fit expressions, who any way discover that they understand the matter.

R. 9. Though we shall receive Professions only in publick for satisfaction of the Church, and other reasons, yet those whose knowledge only is suspected, we may examine in private, because some of understanding are not able in publick to expresse their mindes: and afterwards in publick we shall receive their profession if they are found fit.

R. 10. If any shall publickly offer his profession of Consent, who is a confessed or a convicted scandalous or obstinate sinner; We shall immediately require him to professe openly his Repentance, for his former scandalous sins before we receive his profession of duty for the future, seeing in order that must go first; and if he refuse, we must suspend our numbring him with the founder members, and proceed to publick admonition and Censure if he persevere impenitent.

R. 11. If there be not enough in one Parish that will consent (after our sufficient waiting) we shall joyn them to the next Parish by consent; yet continuing still our meetings for preaching to the rest that consent not, and not medling with alterations of the Ministers maintenance; yet in this weighty

case, we desire advice [illegible] of that Association.

XX. Because all Churches are parts of the Church Universal, and all true Christians are members of that body, and of Christ; and have one Head, Lord, Faith, Baptism; one Rule of Faith and life, one Spirit, and one bond, and common cognisance of entire love to Christ, and one another; and have one Hope, one End, and must be one in blessed union and communion with Christ everlastingly: We judge it therefore of great and indispensable necessity, that we use all good means for the maintaining of this Union and Communion; and to do as much of our work as we can in concord with one another, and as little as may be dividedly, and by our selves: And therefore we resolve according to our duty to keep constant communion and correspondence; and to that end to hold certain meetings of the Ministry in Association, and that according to these followings Rules.

Reg. 1. We judge it convenient to meet in 5. several Associations at 5. several places in this County, *viz.* at *Worcester*, *Evesham*, *Upton*, *Kidderminster*, and *Bromsgrove*, and this once a month on a day to be agreed on (or oftner if need require.)

R. 2. We shall not by dividing the County, presume to limit others to any one of these Associations, but let every Minister according to his own conveniency choose to which of these Associations he will joyn himself, and accordingly subscribe to a Copy of these Articles, which shall be kept at the place of meeting for that Association; and so may any Minister that shall hereafter joyn with us, who at the present doth not.

R. 3. We shall give notice to all Ministers of Piety, and competent ability, who now are not among us, and desire them to joyn with us, and offer them a free debate of any thing which they may scruple, and desire them to adjoin themselves to which Association they judge most convenient.

R. 4.

R.4. We shall at our ordinary meetings keep up a publique Lecture for the common benefit.

R.5. At these meetings we shall maintain some Disputations or other Exercise, which shall be found most usefull to our own edification, especially for the younger sort of Ministers; Or else meet on purpose for this another day.

R.6. We shall here endeavour on consultation to resolve all particular doubts that arise about Discipline, or Worship, or Doctrine, which (for the avoiding of all occasions of division) we have not thought fit to make the matter of this Agreement, or which these general Rules suffice not to determine.

R.7. We shall here also produce and propound to consideration any new point of Doctrine wherein we differ from the most of the Reformed Churches, before we adventure to teach it our hearers.

R.8. We shall here debate all differences in judgement (fit for debate) that may happen among our selves or any of our people.

R.9. We shall here receive any complaint that any people have against any member of our Association, for scandal, false Doctrine, or Male administration; and we all resolve to give an account of our Doctrine and actions, when any offended brother shall so accuse us, both for the satisfaction of the Church and him.

R.10. We shall here make known the Names of all those whom we have put out of our communion; and we resolve all of us to refuse communion with such, and not to receive them into one Church who are cast out of another, except they have given satisfaction, or we first here prove them unjustly cast out.

R.11. We shall here make it known if any member of another Parish shall offer to adjoin themselves to any of our Congregations, as members thereof; and we resolve not to receive any such, except we give here sufficient reasons,

reasons for it; as if they [illegible] of the Minister, or Parish where they live, to do it, or the like.

R. 12. We shall here make it known if there be any members of another Parish (adjoined to no Church) who desire either Sacrament from us, that we may know from the Minister of that place whether they are fit to be admitted or not.

R. 13. Those who being sole Ministers of particular Churches, do doubt whether they alone may judge any man to be unfit for Church-Communion, and so declare him; or may publickly by name rebuke him, they may do well here to take the advice of the Association for their proceedings.

R. 14. We desire that all young Ministers, or any that are not well furnished with discretion and ability to manage those publick reproofs and censures, would do nothing in it without first consulting these Assemblies, yea in so weighty a case as is excluding from Church-Communion, We judge it convenient that all Ministers advise with their Brethren of that Association for their safer proceeding.

R. 15. We shall here consult about the good of neighbour Churches, for helping them where they want teaching, for advising them against Errors, Seducers, or Scandals, and furthering to our power the propagation of the Gospel.

R. 16. We do resolve to frequent these meetings as constantly as we can, and not neglect them and frustrate their ends.

R. 17. We shall once a quarter (and oftner if emergent occasion require it) send Delegates from all these Associations to *Worcester* (not forbidding any other to be there) where we shall hold a more general meeting for the resolving of greatest difficulties, and the more unanimous carrying on the work of the Gospel.

R. 18. We shall admit into these our Associations the neighbour Ministers also of other Counties, where no such Associations

[illegible] they cannot well join in them.

R. 19. Before any of us shall forsake this Agreement and these Resolutions, we shall give our Reasons to the Association, and hear what they can say against it; and not do it without sufficient cause.

R. 20. We resolve in none of our meetings to go beyond the bounds of our Calling, in medling with Secular or State affairs, nor do any thing injurious to the Common wealth; but maintain all just Obedience to Authority; and shall direct all our Consultations to the good of souls, the Propagation of the Gospel, the Unity, Peace, and Reformation of the Church, and the glory and pleasing of God in all.

Consentimus nos infrascripti.

C THE

THE PROFESSION OF THE Associated Churches in *Worcestershire* and the adjacent parts, agreed on in order to further Reformation and exercise of CHRIST's Discipline.

THE PREFACE.

Seeing the sincere making and keeping our Covenant with God in Christ is a chief part of the Christian Religion, and a matter of Absolute Necessity to our Salvation; and the proneness of our sinfull hearts to unfaithfullness and Backsliding, doth require us often to Renue our Resolutions and Covenants; and the Word of God, and example of the Churches, do encourage us hereto; especially at the Restoring or Reforming of a Church which hath fallen into Confusion, Ignorance, Errour or Prosaneness, which is too much the Case of us and too many Congregations in England; *And because Ministers cannot well know who are members of the Churches, and who not, and so must be Ignorant of the extent of their Charges and Duties, without an expression of their Peoples Consent; and for want of this Ministers are at such Uncertainties, and Churches in such disorder, and the Duties of Pastors and People so Defectively performed; whereby many being offended have been occasioned to separate, supposing our Churches to have been no true Churches, nor our Ministers true Ministers, for want of a more express Consent and Combination. And seeing the Pastors cannot with any probability of success, or without great offence to the People, perform those Acts of Teaching and Ruling which Christ hath made the Work of their Office, without the Peoples express Consent (though the sign it self be not particularly determined.) To the end therefore that we may be the faster tyed to Christ and one another, and may more Faithfully discharge our mutuall Duties; and this Church may be more Reformed, and the Discipline of Christ be more faithfully and successfully exercised, and that none may have just cause to take themselves injured thereby, and that no more may take occasion of separation and division from us: We whose Names are afterwritten (as in the presence of God who searcheth the heart, and will severely judge those that are false in his Covenant,) do seriously, upon deliberation, and in the fear of Almighty God, make this solemn Profession of our Belief and Resolution.*

THE PROFESSION

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Sonne our Lord, which was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was Crucified Dead and Buried, he descended into Hell. The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand

I Believe that there is one only God [a]: The Father [b], Infinite in Being [c], Wisdome [d], Goodness [e], and Power [f]: the Maker [g], Preserver [h], and Disposer [i] of all things; and the most Just [k] and Mercifull [l] Lord of All [m].

I Believe that Man-kinde being fallen by sin [n] from God [o] and Happiness [p], under the Wrath of God [q], the Curse of his Law [r], and the Power of the Devil [s], God so Loved the World [t], that he gave his only Son to be their Redeemer [u]: Who, being God [*], and One with the Father [x], did take to him our Nature [y], and became man [z], being conceived of the holy Ghost [a] in the Virgin *Mary* [b], and born of her, and named JESUS CHRIST [c]: and having lived on earth without sin [d], and wrought many Miracles [e]; for a witness of his Truth [f], he gave up himself [g] a Sacrifice for our sins [h], and a Ransome for us [i], in suffering death on the Cross [k]: and being Buried [l], he Rose again the third day [m]; and afterward Ascended into Heaven [n], where he is Lord of All [o] in Glory with the Father [p]. And having Ordained [q] that all that truly Repent [r] and Believe in him [s], and Love him above all things [t], and sincerely Obey him [u], and that to the Death [*], shall be saved [x], and they that will not [y] shall be damned [z], and commanded his Ministers to preach the Gospel to the World [a]; He will come again [b] and raise the Bodies of all men from Death [c], and will set all the World before him to be judged [d], according

of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the body, and the Life Everlasting. Amen.

[illegible] they have done in the body: and he will adjudge the Righteous to Life Everlasting [f], and the rest to Everlasting Punishment [g]; which shall be executed accordingly [h].

I Believe that God the holy Ghost [i], the Spirit of the Father and the Son [k], was sent from the Father [l] by the Son [m], to Inspire [n] and guide [o] the Prophets [p] and Apostles [q], that they might fully reveal the Doctrine of Christ [r]: And by multitudes of Evident Miracles, and Wonderfull Gifts [s] to be the great Witness of Christ [t] and of the Truth of his holy Word [u]: And to dwell * and work [x] in all that are drawn to [y] Believe [z], that, being first joyned to Christ their Head [a], and into one Church [b] which is his Body [c], and so pardoned [d] and made the Sons of God [e], they may be a Peculiar people [f] sanctified to Christ [g]; and may mortifie the flesh [h], and overcome the world [i] and the Devil [k]: and being zealous of good Works [l], may serve God in Holiness and Righteousness [m], and may live in the speciall Love [n] and Communion of the Saints [o]; and in hope of Christs coming [p], and of Everlasting Life [q].

I do heartily Take this One God, for my Only God [a], and my Chief Good [b]: and this Jesus Christ for my only Lord-Redeemer and Saviour [c], and this Holy Ghost for my Sanctifier [d]: and the Doctrine by him Revealed, and Sealed by his Miracles, and now contained in the Holy Scriptures [e], I do take for the Law of God [f], and the Rule of my Faith and Life [g]: And Repenting unfeignedly of my sins [h], I do Resolve [i] through the Grace of God [k] sincerely to obey him [l], both in Holiness to God, and Righteous-

nelsto Men [m], and in speciall Love [illegible] Communion with them [n]; against [illegible] the Temptations of the Devil, the World, and my own Flesh [o], and [illegible] the Death [p].

I Do consent [a] to be a Member of the particular [b] Church of Christ at ——— whereof ——— ——— Teacher [c] and Overseer [d], and [e] to submit to ——— Teaching [e] and Ministeriall Guidance and Oversight [f], according to Gods Word [g], and to hold Communion with that Church in the publick Worshipping of God [h], and to submit to the Brotherly admonition of fellow-Members [i], that so we may be built up in Knowledge [k], and Holiness [l], and may the better maintain our Obedience to Christ [m], and the Welfare of this Society [n], and hereby may the more Please and Glorifie GOD [o].

[a] Deut.6.4. 1 Cor.8.4.6. Isa.44.6. & 45. 5,14,21. [b] 1 Cor.8.6. Eph.4.6. Phil.2.11. [c] Isa.57.15. 1 Tim.1.17. Deut.33.27. Rom.1.20.Psal.139.7,8,9,&c. Job 11.7,8,9. Isa.40.17. Rev.1.8. Heb.7.3. [d] Psal.147.5. Rom.16.27. Jude 25. Job 36.5. Rom.11,33. [e] Exod.34.6. Psal.119.68. [f] Rev.19.6. & 4.8. & 11.17. Gen 17.1. [g] Pro.22.2. Isa.51.13. Psal.104.24. Gen.1. Isa.37.16. [h] Neh 9 6. Heb.1.3. [i] Luke 12 6,7. Psal.135.6.Acts 17.28.Pro.16.33. Job 34.13. Eph.1.11. Dan.4.35. [k] Rev.15.3.Isa.45.21. Psal.11.7. Rom.3.4,5,6. Gen.18.25. [l] Exod. 34.6. Neh.9.17,31. Psal.103.8. Jer.3.12. Joel 2.13.Luke 6.36. [m] Psal.47.7. & 29.10.& 118.27.

[n] Rom.5.12,18. & 6.23. [o] Eph.2.12. Hos.14.1. Rom.3.9,10. [p] Rom.3. 23.Gen.3.17,23. Rom.6.23. [q] Eph.2.3. Ezra 8.22. Rom.5.9. 1 Thess.1,10. [r] Gal.3.10,13. Rom.3.19,20,23. Gen.2.17. 1 Cor.15.22. Rom.2.15,12.& 4. 15. & 5.13. [s] Eph.2.2. 2 Tim.2.26. Acts 26.18. Heb.2.14. 1 Joh.3.8,10. 2 Pet.2.19. Col.2.15. Joh.14.30. & 16.11. [t] Joh.3.16. [u] Joh.1.29. & 3.16, 17,18. & 6.33,34,35,51. Col.1.20.Joh.4.42. 1 Joh.4.14. & 2.2. Gal.3.13. Heb.9.15. [x] Rom.9.5. & 10.12. Joh.1.1,2,3. 1 Tim.3.16. Col.2.9. Joh.8. 58. & 17.5. Col.1.16,17. Rev.1.11,17. with Isa.44.1. & 48.12. 1 Joh.5.20. Isa.9.6,7. [y] Joh.10.30. & 17.11,21,22. [z] Heb.2.16,14. Phil.2.6,7,8. Joh.1.14. Gal.4.4. [a] 1 Tim.2.5. 1 Cor.15.47. Rom.5.15. Joh.5.27. & 12.34 [b] Mat.1.20. Luk.1.35. [c] Luk.1.27,31. Mat.1.18. [d] Mat.1.22,23. [e] Heb.4.15. & 7.26. 1 Pet. 2.22.Joh.8.46. [f] & Heb.2.3,4. Joh.2.11,23. & 6.14.& 10.41. & 15.24. & 5. 36.& 10.25,37,38.& 14.11.Acts 2.22.& 7.36. [g] Tit.2.14. 1 Tim.2.6. Joh.10. 15,17,18. [h] Heb.9.26.& 10.12,26. [i] Mat.20.28. 1 Cor.6.20.& 7.23. Mar.10.45. 1 Tim.2.6. Isa 53.10. Heb.10.8,9,10,14. 1 Pet.3.18. [k] Joh.19.7,18,19. Mat. 27.31.35. 1 Cor.2.2. Eph.2.16. Col.1.20. [l] Mat.27.60. 1 Cor.15.4. [m] Mat.28. Luk.24. Joh.20,& 21. 1 Cor.15.4,5,6,7,12.2 Cor.5.15.1 Thes.4.14. Acts 1.22. & 2 31. 1 Pet.1.3.& 3.21. [n] Luke 24.51.Acts 1.9. Eph.4.8,9,10. [o] Acts 10.36. & 2.36. 1 Tim.6.15,16.Rom.14.9. Mat.28.18,19. Rev.1.5,18.& 17.14.Phil.2. 9,10,11.Eph.1.20,21,22. Mat.11.27.Joh.13.3.Luke 10.22. [p] Joh.17.5. 1 Tim. 3.16.1 Pet 1.21.Rev.3.21.Luk.22.69. Col.3.1.Heb.1.3 & 8.1.& 12 2.& 10.12. [q] Isa.2.3.Mic.4.2. 1 Cor.9.22. [r] Mar.1.15.& 6.16. Luke 13.3,5. Acts 2.38.& 3. 19.&.17.30.& 26.20. Rev.2,5.Luke 24.47. Act.5.31. & 11.18.2 Pet.3.9.Heb.

6.1.

6, [illegible] 10,16. John 3 36. & 6.35.40,47. & 11.25. [illegible] 3 1. [illegible] Joh. 1.21. & 16.27. Mat.10.37. 1 Cor. [illegible] Eph.6.24. 1 Cor.2.9. Jam.1.12. [a] Heb. 5.9. Rev.22. 14. Mat.7.24. [illegible] Mat.5.18. Rom.2.5,6,7. Acts 10.35. Rev.14.13. Phil. 2.14. Col.3.23,24. 2 Cor.5.8,14. Joh.12.26. 1 Joh.3.22,23. Gen.22.16. [b] Mar. 10.22. & 14.13 Heb.3.6,14. & 6.11. Rev.2.10,26. & 18.11. Mat.16.25. & 10. 39. Luk.17.33. [c] & [d] & [e] Mat.25. Mar.16.16. Luk.19.27. Mat.13. 2 Thes.1.7,8, 9. & 2.12. [f] Mar.16.15,16. Mat.28.20.21. Rom.10.7, [g] to the end. Col.1.23,28. 2 Tim.4.2. Rom.2.16. 1 Cor.9.16. [h] Acts 1.11. Joh.1.4. 3.18. Heb.10.37. Rev.22.17. 7.20. Jam.5.7,8. 2 Thes.2.1. 1 Cor.15.23. 1 Thes.2.19. & 3.13. & 5.23. [i] 1 Cor.15.1. 1 Thes.4.16,17,18. Acts 24.15. Joh.5.29. [k] Mat.25.31,32. Joh.5.22,27. Acts 17.31. Rom.2.16. 2 Tim.4.1. 1 Pet.4.5. Rev.20.12. Dan.7. 10. Heb.6.2. [l] Mat.6.4,6,18. & 16.27. Mat.25. throughout. Rom.2.6,7. Rev.2. 23. 2 Cor.5.10. [m] & [n] & [o] Mat.25.31. to the end. 2 Cor.11.15. Mat.13.40,41, 42,43. Luk.19.27. 2 Thes.1.8,9,10. & 2.12. Jud.14,15. Rev.2.7,11,17. 2 Tim. 4.8,18. Joh.17.24. Luk.10.11. Mar.9.43,44,46,48. Mat.7.19. & 18.8,9.

[p] Mat.28.19. Acts 5.3,4. 1 Joh.5.7. Isa.40. 3,14,15,16,17. Heb.9.14. 1 Cor. 2.10. & 12.11. Psal.104.30. & 139.7,8. Job 33.4. Luk.1.35. Mat.1.18,20. Isa. 61.1,2. Luk.4.18. Mat.12.28. 2 Cor.13.13. Rev.1.4. Mat.12.32. [q] Mat.10.20. Rom.8.11. Gal.4.6. Rom.8.9. 1 Pet.1.11. Phil.1.19. Joh.15.14,15. [r] & [s] Joh. 14.16, 17,26. & 15.26. [t] & [u] 1 Pet.1.10,11,12. 2 Pet.1.21. [w] & [x] & [y] 2 Tim.3.16. Joh. 16.13,14,15. Eph.3.3,4,5,7. Gal.1.1. [z] Eph.2.20. Mat.28.20. Eph.4.11,12,13. Acts 20.27,32. Eph.5.26,27. [a] Tim.6.14. Joh.20.22. 1 Cor.2.10,12,13. 1 Pet. 1.12. Heb.2.3,4. [b] Tim.2.7. Col.1.28. [c] & [d] & [e] Acts 2. throughout. Heb.2.3,4. Gal.3.2,5. Acts 4.16,30. & 6.8. & 8.13,6. & 5.12. & 7.36. & 14.3. & 19.11, 12,16,17,18,19. Acts 2.22. & 7.36. Mar.16.17,18. Joh.14.12. & 5.36. & 10. 25,37,38. & 3.2. & 9.16. 2 Cor.12.12. Mar.16.17,18,20. 1 Cor.14. Joh.16.8, 9,10,11. 1 Joh.5.6,7,8,9,10. Act.2.32,33. & 3.15,16. & 5.30.31,32. Joh.15. 26,27. Act.9.3,15,17. & 15.8,9. Joh.1.32. Rev.19.10. [f] Rom.8,9,11. 2 Cor. 6.16. Joh.14.17. 1 Cor.3.16. 2 Tim.1.14. 1 Joh.4.15,16. & 5.10. [g] 1 Cor.12. 11. Eph.3.20. Phil.2.13. Col.1.29. Heb.13.21. Rom.8.5,11,16,26. Gal.5.16,17, 18,25. Eph.3.16. & 5.9,18. & 6.18. [h] Ioh.6.44. & 12.32. [i] Rom.8.9. Phil.3. 3. Eph.1.13. & 4.3,4. Iudg.19. Gal.4.6. & 3.14. 2 Ioh.14.17. 2 Cor.5.13. Act.15.9. 1 Cor.6.19. Act.5.32. [k] Col.1.18. & 2.19. Eph.4.15,16. & 1.22. & 5.23. 1 Cor.12.27. & 2.2,11. & 6.17. Eph.50.30,31,32. [l] & 3.17. Ioh.6.44, 45. & 5.40. Col.2.6. Gal.2.20. [m] & [n] 1 Cor.12.12,13. Eph.5.23.27,30. Col.1. 24. Rom.12.4,5. Eph.4.4. & 2.16. [o] Act.10.43. & 2.38. Rom.3.25. Act.26. 18. [p] Ioh.1.12. Gal.3.26. & 4.5. Heb.2.10. Rom.8.16,17. [q] Tit.2.14. 1 Pet.2. 9. Mal.3.17. [r] Ioh.17.19. 1 Cor.6.11. Act.26.18. 2 Tim.2.21. [s] Iam.4.7. Eph. 6.11. & 4.27. 1 Pet.5.8. 1 Ioh.3.8. [t] Rom.8.1, to 14. Gal.5.17,24. & 6.8. [u] 1 Ioh.2.15. & 5.4,5. Iam.1.27. & 4.4. Gal.1.4. & 6.14. Rom.12.2. [w] Tit.2. 14. 2 Cor.7.11. Rev.3.19. Iam.2.24. [x] Luk.1.74,75. Mat.22.37,39,40. [y] Ioh. 13.34. & 15.12,17. 1 Pet.1.22. & 2.17. & 3.8. 1 Ioh.3.11,14,23. [z] Act.2.42, to 47. & 4.32. Eph.2.19. Heb.10.25. [a] Ioh.1.3,7. [b] Gal.5.3. 1 Thes.1.10. 2 Thes.3.5. 1 Cor.1.7. 2 Pet.3.11,12. Col.1.27. 1 Cor.15.19. Tit.2.13. [c] Tit. 3.7. Heb.6.11.18,19. Rom.8.24,25. 1 Pet.1.13. Tit.1.2.

[a] Exod.20,2,3. Jos.24.16,17,18,21,22,24. [b] Psal.73.24,25,26,27,28. & 4.6, 7. & 16,5. & 63.3. [c] Joh.20.28. & 1.12. Phil.3.8. [d] Mat 28.19. 1 Thes.5.19. Gen. 6.3. Psal.51.11. Eph.4.30. Isa.63.10,11. Acts 7.51. [e] & [f] Isa.2.3. Mic.4.2. Psal.1.2.

Rom.

Rom.7.22,25. Gal 6.2. Heb 7. [illegible]
14.17. Jam.4.12. Isa [illegible]
39. 2 Pet.3.16. Acts [illegible]
20. Prov.22.20,21. Luk.1.2,3,4 Dan.10.21. [illegible] Rom.
16.25,26, 1 Joh.1.3 1 Cor.15.1 & 11.23. [illegible] Pſal.3.1. 2 Pet.
3.1,2. Pſal.102 18. Eph.4.12 [f] & [g] Iſa 8,20. Gal [illegible] Pſal.110.153 Phil.3.16.
Gal.6.16. Jam 2.8. 1 Cor.4.6. [h] Luk.15.17,18. Acts 2.37. & 3.19 [i] Luk.15.18,
19. Acts 11 23. Luk.14.33. [k] Eph.2 5,8. Phil.2.13. [l] Rom.6.16. Heb.5.9. Jer.
7.23. & 42.6 [m] Acts 24 16. See above. [n] Heb.10 25. more above. [o] Eph.6.10,
to 19. [p] Tim.6.9. Luk.8.13, [q] Rev.2.10. Rom.8.17,38,39. Mat 10.22.

[r] & [s] Act 2.41,46.& 4.36. & [illegible] 12,13. & 9.26.& 14 23. Tit.1.5.Eph 4.16. Acts
13.26. & 14.27. 1 Cor.4.17.& 14.4,5,23. Col.4.16. [t] & [u] & [x] & [y] Act.10 28. Eph.
4.11,12,Heb 13.7.17,24 1 Theſ.5.12,13. 1 Tim.5.17 & 4.12 Tit 2.15. Luk.10,
16 1 Cor.16.16 & 4.1,2. 1 Tim. [illegible]5. Tit.1.7,Luk.12.42. [z] & [a] Gal.1.8,9. & 2.5,
11,14. Rom.16.17. 1 Cor.11.2,23. [b] Acts 2.41,46.1 Cor.14.23. [c] & 5.4,11,
7,13. Act 15.22. Rev.2.1,8,12,18. 2 Theſ.3,6,11. Heb.10.25. [d] Mat.18.15,
16,17.2 Theſ.3.15.Rom.15 14.Heb.3.13 & 10 24,25 Lev.1,.17. Eph.5.11.Pro.
11.12. & 15.10 Pſal.141.5. Pro.19.1. [e] & [f] Rom. 14.19. & 15.2. 1 Theſ.5.11.
2 Cor.10.8. 1 Cor.14 3,4,17,19,26. Cor.12.19 Eph.4.19 Jud.20,2 Pet.3.18. 1 Cor.
1.1. 2 Cor.6.6.& 8.7.Phil.2.19 Col.1.9.& 3 10. 2 Cor.7.1. Heb 12.14.Eph.4.12.
[m] Heb.3.13. & 10.24,25,39. 1 Pet.1.14 Rom 16.19. 1 Theſ.5.11. [n] 1 Cor.14 5,
12,26.Eph.4.12,16. 1 Cor.5.6,7.& 10.33.& 12.12,14,25. [o] Col 1.10. 1 Theſ.
4.1, 1 Cor.14 13. Pſal.147.1.& 149.4. Pro.25.8.Mat.18,20. Eph.3.21. Rom.16.
27. 1 Tim.1.17. 1 Cor.10 31. *Rom* 13.6.

More for renewing Covenant with God, and Subſcribing it; ſee Deut 26.17,18.
& 29.11,12,13.& 30 15,19. Jos.24.16,21,24,25,26. 2 King.23.2,3. 2 Chron.
15.10,11,12,13 14.15. & 23 16 & 29.10,30 & 34.31,32. Dan.12.28,29,30,31.
Ezra 10 3,5,7,8, Neh.9 38. & 10.28,29. *Iſa.* 44.3,4,5.

MATH. 28.18,19,20. *All power is Given to me in Heaven and in Earth: Go ye therefore and Diſciple all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt: teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

HEB.13.17. HEB.10.24,25. ROM.15.6. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves: for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account; that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. And let us conſider one another, to provoke unto Love and to Good Works: Not forſaking the Aſſembling of our ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is; but exhorting one another. That ye may with* One minde and One mouth *glorifie God even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

ACTS 20.28,29,30,31. *Take* heed *therefore unto* your ſelves, *and* to All the flock *over the which the* holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers; *to feed the Church of God which he hath purchaſed with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing ſhall grievous wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the flock. Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe ſpeaking perverſe things to draw away Diſciples after them. Therefore watch.*

ISA.44.3,4,5. *For I will pour water on him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy ſeed, and my Bleſſing upon thine offſpring: And they ſhall ſpring up as among the graſs, as willowes by the water-courſes. One ſhall ſay* [I am the Lords,] *and another ſhall call himſelf by the Name of Jacob: and another ſhall* Subſcribe with his hand unto the Lord, *and ſurname himſelf by the name of Iſrael.*

(See *Calvin* and *Muſculus* on this Text.)

EXPLICATION

of some Passages in the foregoing

PROPOSITIONS

AND

PROFESSION.

With an Answer to some Objections that are like to be made against them.

Written by

RICH. BAXTER.

To prevent the causeless Dissent and Separation, of any sincere Christians from our CHURCHES, or sincere Ministers from our

ASSOCIATIONS.

Especially for the Satisfaction of the Inhabitants of

KEDERMINSTER.

LONDON,

Printed by *A. M.* for *Thomas Underhill*, at the Anchor and Bible in *Pauls* Church-yard near the little North-door, and *Francis Tyton*, at the three Daggers in Fleetstreet near *Dunstons* Church. 1653.

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AN

AN EXPLICATION of some PASSAGES IN THE Propositions.

AS I dare not undertake to give the full sense of all my Reverend Brethren who have subscribed to these Propositions, so I must intreat the Reader to understand that I have no commission from them for any Explication of their mindes, further then what is done already in their words: and therefore that you must not take what I Write as coming from them, but as my own private thoughts: and if in any thing you mislike my Interpretations, do not therefore mislike our Propositions: For it is the Text and not the Comment that is publiquely owned: The Text is theirs, the Comment is mine.

Yet I thought [illegible] to my own [illegible] my Brethren in their debates; left [illegible] the ſtumbling of any, that have not had opportunity to underſtand our intentions.

And firſt I muſt intreat you to remember theſe few Generals following.

1. We never intended theſe Propoſitions, for the taking any ſober man (of any of the Parties whoſe Union we endeavour) from his former Principles; nor for the laying down of any middle way, in which the differing Parties may accommodate, by any abatement on each or any ſide, of their former Opinions. For we know that can be no way of Generall Accord, without a long and full debate of all differences, with all perſons, or with all the leaders that can ſway the reſt. For if we ſhould ſatisfie all that we conferre with, and joyntly agree upon ſome abatement of our Opinions; we cannot expect that others ſhould be ever the more altered or united, that hear not our reaſons: Or if all ſhould hear them, yet mens judgements will be variouſly wrought on, according to the degrees of their ſtrength or weakneſs; or according to their former prejudice and apprehenſions; and much according to the inclination of their Wils, to Reformation, Holineſs, Unity and Peace. We do therefore ſuppoſe in theſe Propoſitions, that thoſe whom we unite with, do ſtill retain their differing Judgements; And our buſineſs is but this: *To improve thoſe Points wherein we are all agreed, for unanimous practice.* Till we have opportunity to ſeek after an Accomodation of Opinions, or a conviction of each other, we reſolve, by Gods help, to cloſe in an amicable practice of ſo much as we do Conſent in. It is utterly unbeſeeming any Member of Chriſt, to make more diviſions wilfully, becauſe we are neceſſitated to ſome differences through our weakneſs: and to unite and aſſociate in nothing, becauſe we cannot do it in all things: and to fly from each others ſociety, as enemies or aliens, becauſe we hold ſome different opinions: as if we were not the Sons of one God, the Members of one Chriſt, nor might live in the ſame family or joyn in the ſame Churches or Worſhip, becauſe we are not of the ſame intellectual complexion

fection in every point, nor all mens knowledge of the ſame meaſure. We are not ſuch ſtrangers to our ſelves and mankinde, as not to know, that we muſt unavoidably be of various Opinions, while we live here in imperfection; and differ in part, while we know but in part. We ſuppoſe the Apoſtle never expected that all the *Corinthians* ſhould in all things have the ſame Opinions, when he ſo importunately perſwades them, by the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no Diviſions among them, but that they be perfectly joyned together in the ſame minde, and in the ſame judgement, 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. We remember his command, *Phil.* 3. 15, 16. *Let us as many as be perfect be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you: Nevertheleſs whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us minde the ſame thing.*

2. You muſt underſtand, that we have no intent by this our Agreement to foreſtall any further means or attempts for Accomodation, or neerer Unity: but contrarily to prepare for it; being confident that no way is ſo likely to accompliſh it, as a concordant practice of what we are agreed in, and the conſtant amicable aſſociation and familiarity of the diſſenters. Nay ſome of us have much more to propound to the Churches, for Conciliation and Accord, when ever God ſhall call us to it, and let us ſee that it is likely to be regarded or do any good.

3. Much leſs do we take up with what we are now agreed on, as a perfect, or fully-ſufficient way; as if the points which are laid by, and wherein the ſeveral Parties differ, did contain in them nothing of any moment; but all that is uſefull were contained in theſe Points wherein we are all agreed. Nor do we intend to tye our ſelves to take up with theſe, and never to go further. But, as Chriſt ſaith in another caſe, *If any man do the Will of God, he ſhall know*, &c. So I verily think, that conſcionable, friendly practiſing of ſo much of Chriſts Diſcipline as we generally know, would have helpt us to know the reſt ſooner then our perverſe contendings have done; and would have prevented thoſe ſad effects of our Diviſions, which muſt lie heavy on ſome mens conſciences, here or hereafter.

4. I must therefore especially [illegible] whereas several things are left undetermined in these Propositions, and you think in the reading, that you are at a loss for our meaning; expecting that all things should be particularly and punctually determined of, that we have done this purposely and of design; and therefore the errour is in your expectation of a more particular determination then will stand with our ends. For seeing we intend but to single out what we know every party may agree to, without deserting his own principles; we must needs leave out those particulars wherein we are not agreed.

5. Understand that we have left many things to be *pro re nata* upon the emergent occasion when it comes to practice, agreed on at our Association-meetings, which we could not without many inconveniences, agree on in these Proposition before hand: Especially things that vary according to circumstances of time, place, persons, occasions, *&c.*

6. Understand, that though in many things we have tied up our selves by these Propositions, from acting in a way of singularity. Yet in many Points we have left each party and person to the liberty of their judgement: so that they may go *Above* this our Agreement, so be it, in so doing they go not *Against* it.

More particularly

1. Whereas in the first General Proposition we profess, not to addict our selves to parties, but to practice unanimously those known truths that the sober and godly of each Party are agreed in.] We mean only those Parties who acknowledge a Discipline, and are so [sober] as to disclaim those Principles which are utterly inconsistent with the healing of our breaches, and the Peace and Union of the Churches. Particularly we mean the Presbyterians, Independants, and Episcopall who are Moderate and Judicious. We mean not any Seekers that disclaim Discipline; nor Papists; nor Popish Episcopall Divines, who will have all the world come to the Romish Polity, or else they must have no peace. But it is only the Protestant Episcopall Divines, whose principles I take

take to be consistent with our Propositions: And if there be any other Party so sober as to depart no further from the wales of Peace, it is such that we mean. But if it had been our intent to have laid by all that any Party will controvert, we should have agreed on nothing.

2. Where in the same Proposition we say [at present *only* to practice] we intend not that every man of us is tied from practising any thing but what is so agreed on: But that we do Agree in and tye our selves [only] to so much; but may notwithstanding privately differ in our practice, so far as we have not restrained our selves in this Agreement, and are not restrained by Gods Word.

3. The eighth Proposition leaves many weighty Cases undetermined about excluding such haynous offendors, whose sinne is either notorious, or generally suspected, and yet for want of accusers and prosecutors are never brought to Justice? and also about persons who are under a long triall, *&c.* But we take these cases to be such as must be usually determined according to circumstances upon knowledge of the particular case: and therefore fittest to be determined at our Meetings, when it shall fall out: and not to trouble and puzzle our selves with such Cases before they fall; seeing we cannot well make any agreement before hand (except very generall) but what will be found defective in the application. Only thus much I should advise, that if it be known that any person is guilty of a capitall crime (as for example of Adultery) though we be not bound alway to accuse them openly, or to bring them to such a confession or self-accusation as may hazzard their lives; yet 1. The Pastor may suspend them and in some cases require the people to avoid them, when the fact is publiquely known (though the party not prosecuted;) and give but a generall intimation of the fault, as known already; though perhaps the Evidence will not hold in Law. (As I have known persons that openly confess Adultery at home, but denying it before the Judge, come off as if they were innocent; and yet confess it again when they come home.) And I should think that such persons should not be re-admitted to Communion, till they do manifest publique serious penitence in the Congregation: but only in Generall

termes

termes (seeing they are not bound to utter particulars so as to expose their lives to danger:) As that I confess before God and this Congregation that I am a haynous sinner, and unworthy of Communion with the Church: the particulars I need not expreſs, seeing the Congregation may easily know my meaning. &c.] Whether it be meet that Eccleſiasticall censure, or the Magistrates censure go first, we do not go about to determine.

4. Concerning the tenth Propoſition (which will be moſt queſtioned) I desire it may be obſerved: 1. That we meddle not with the term [Excommunication.] 2. And therefore they that say we meddle with the *Thing*, muſt define Excommunication, and ſhew that the work that we here agree on doth reach that definition. 3. Which if they do, then they will make Excommunication to be no more then this application of Chriſts doctrine to a particular perſon and caſe, which every Miniſter of the Goſpel may perform: For we mention in our Agreement no more. 4. I am ſure that delivering up to Satan, and the great Anathematizing Excommunication, is commonly taken to go much further and contain more, then we here conclude on. 5. Yet obſerve, that we here ſuppoſe the fact and faultineſs proved beyond doubt: and when we ſpeak of Miniſters Applicatory requiring the Avoidance of ſuch perſons; if any think we wrongfully authorize him to do this without the Presbytery, Congregation, or Biſhop; remember that we ſpeak not here of examining Witneſſes, much leſs giving them their Oathes, or the like preparation for diſcovery of the guilt. How farre people or any others may have a hand in this we do not determine. 6. Nor do we determine whether it muſt needs be more Miniſters then one, that muſt agree in this, before the publique Application: yet afterward, we have limited our ſelves in this for Unity, Peace, and avoiding of raſh applications. Though for my own part, I am very confident that it is their Errour, whoever they be, that deny the power of Excommunication it ſelf to a ſingle Paſtor, at leaſt, where he is the ſole Overſeer of that particular Church.

The Objections againſt this tenth Propoſition, I will anſwer anon.

5. The

ſufficient proof, as thoſe that well obſerve it may diſcern.

6. Concerning the 12th Prop. I muſt tell you, that we cannot agree to the looſe practice of thoſe Miniſters and Churches, who think it enough to keep people from the Sacrament, and never proceed further with them in way of Diſcipline: but let 500. or a 1000. live in a Pariſh without any more then ſuch a Suſpenſion: whenas Suſpenſion is but in order to their Tryall, or their Reformation or Rejection thereupon. Yea they determin not, nor is it known, whether all theſe perſons are members of their Churches, or not? Many Reaſons we have againſt this courſe, beſides what are mentioned in the Propoſitions.

7. We take it that the 15th Propoſition containeth the true mean, between the Uſurped Power of ſome Paſtors, to binde the People by a known erring ſentence, to go againſt Gods Word; and the Uſurped Power which many pretend to, of Ruling the Church by their Major Vote. But how far the Congregation ſhould firſt have Cogniſance of the matter, or be heard in the debate; or how far the Miniſters muſt endeavour their conſent, or ſuſpend their own actions, for want of their conſent, we do not determin. And therefore all moderate Presbyterians and Independents may well agree with us in this; becauſe its no Power that we deny the Paſtors, but a Power of binding men to go againſt Gods word; and it is not any of their Liberty that we deny the People, but only Ruling Miniſteriall Authority, which God never gave them, we muſt needs deny them.

8. Concerning the 17th Propoſition (which many will ſtumble at) I deſire you to obſerve theſe things.

1. That as we avoid the Titles of Lay-Elders and Preaching-Elders, ſo we do purpoſely avoid the determination of that Controverſie, Whether Chriſt hath appointed Eccleſiaſticall Elders, diſtinct in Office from Teaching-Elders, having no Authority to Preach, Baptize or Adminiſter the Lords Supper, though they have Gifts? I confeſs my own private opinion is, that neither Scripture nor Antiquity did know any ſuch Church-Officers: But as I ſo much reverence and value the contrary-minded, as not to expect that my Judgment ſhould ſtand in any competition with theirs, or in the leaſt to ſway any man to my opinion from theirs (though upon the concurrent Judgment of ſo many Learned men that are of the ſame opinion with me, I might reaſonably expect, that other mens reputation ſhould create no prejudice;) ſo it is nothing to my

Bre[illegible] is. We are not ſo unconſiderately [illegible] as to think we muſt or may reject all thoſe from our Communion, that differ in this Point from us; or that it is a matter of ſo great moment, that may hinder our fraternall and peaceable Aſſociation.

2. We have therefore agreed of the work of Aſſiſting-Elders, and leave the diſcuſſion of their further Authority, and diſtinction of their Office from Teaching-Elders, to others.

3. And that each party may well agree to this Propoſition, without forſaking their Principles, is beyond doubt. For the Presbyterians and the Congregationall party, they both are for ſuch Elders, as ſhall Rule, and not adminiſter Sacraments; and though ſome of one ſort, ſay, they may preach, 1. They ſay not that they *muſt* preach where the Teaching-Elders are well and preſent; 2. And perhaps it is becauſe they would allow another gifted member to do the like. And for the Epiſcopall Divines, their practice and their writings prove what I ſay: For they have ever ſince the Reformation allowed great numbers of Readers in *England*, of far lower abilities then we expreſs in our Propoſitions; ſuch as never preached, and ſome that were fain to labour for their livings in ſecular employments, as this Countrey knows. And though they allowed them to Baptiſe and adminiſter the Lords Supper, yet they never affirmed that they muſt do it, when there was an abler Miniſter of the ſame Church to do it. And in their writings they do maintain the lawfullneſs of placing ſuch Reading Miniſters in Chappels or Pariſh Churches under able Paſtors. So that its paſt doubt, that we are all agreed, that there may be ſuch Officers, or Elders choſen to do the work that is here expreſſed. And if any think it a matter of ſo great neceſſity, that we agree in our belief of theſe Elders further Power, as that we muſt not Aſſociate with thoſe that agree not, I would intreat him to tell me, why it is not in our Creed? or why it never was in the Creed of any Church? or whether no Church had ever a ſufficient Creed, ſo large as to contain all Points of abſolute neceſſity to ſalvation, or without which, we muſt avoid mens ſociety? or whether he dare yet put it in his Creed among fundamentals, or Points of ſuch neceſſity [I Believe that Lay or meer-Ruling Elders are, or are not *jure divino*?] Or whether he accuſe not the Scripture it ſelf of inſufficiency, for ſpeaking ſo darkly of fundamentals themſelves, as that the moſt Godly and Learned are not able to underſtand it? And whether he lay not a ground of ſeparation from multitudes of eminent

4. And observe further, that the Elders that we here speak of, are only Assistants to able Preachers: we do not say, that such may be allowed of alone, where there is no other to preach (though what might be done in case of necessity, I will not determin.) But if a great Church have one or two able men to Preach publikely, and will moreover appoint some sober, godly, orthodox men to help them in Private oversight, Instruction, admonition and reproof; and if one call these Lay-Elders or Ruling-Elders, and another take them to be inferior Ministers, as some sober Chappell Readers were, I would not quarrell about the notions or Titles while we agree about the work to be done. Nor would I dare to reproach them with the name of Dumbe doggs on one side, or Lay-Eldeers (as dumbe) on the other.

5. I thought meet also to tell you thus much of my own opinion; that it seems to me the best way, (at our first ordering of our Churches according to these Propositions) to take in none but Schoolmasters, Physicians, or other Learned men to be Elders (where such are to be had that are meet:) and for those of our Abler hearers that are unlearned, that it will be fittest first to try them in the Office of Deacons: both because the Office of Deacons is most unquestionable to all sorts and parties; and so it will avoid the reproaches of dissenters: and because the Apostles made Deacons before they ordained any fixed Elders of particular Churches; and they made abler men Deacons then any of us are; and therefore none may think the Office to be below him; and because it is orderly to ascend by degrees: and the Apostles words 1 *Tim.*4.8,9,10,11,12,13. together with the constant expressions and practice of Antiquity, do shew that this is a degree to the Eldership; and that Deacons have more power about Word and Sacraments, then is commonly allowed to meer-Ruling Elders; and therefore may be more helpfull to us; yea that they joyned with the Presbyters in Consistory, is the common opinion. And the danger of misguiding and dividing our Congregations by men of weak Judgments, is so great; that I think it much fitter to try them first in an Office of known Inferiority (for all confess that Deacons should be Guided by the Elders,) wherein they may be as serviceable to the Church; then to begin them in an Office of meer Power, wherein they will think their Votes to be of equall Authority with the most Judicious Teachers, and so may breed con-

capable of [illegible] *Mistaken*, of the Office of Deacons and Elders.) This course therefore I have propounded to my Brethren of this Association; and they think as I do: But for other Brethren that joyn with us some living neer 30 miles from us, (so that we have more seldome opportunities to meet,) we could not yet propound it to them. If any shall refuse the Office of Deacons, as too mean for them, they shall thereby discover that Pride that will prove them unfit to be either Elders or Deacons; and you will have cause to thank God, that thereby a mischief to the Church is prevented, which might have followed, if such unhumbled men had crept into Authority.

6. But the great Objection against this Proposition will be (by some) That we allow none to be Elders but those that are ordained, and so overthrow meer-Ruling Elders. To which I answer: 1. These Brethren must consider, that we are forced for unity to speak indistinctly of all that are meer Assisting Elders and do not actually preach and administer Sacraments, whether they take themselves to have Authority to do more (as other Ministers) or not: now they will confess that such inferior or Assisting Ministers must be Ordained: and we cannot now distinguish. 2. I never could learn that it is the Judgment of Presbyterians or Congregationall men, that it is unlawfull to Ordain meer-Ruling Elders. And if they may do it, why should they not yield to it for peace, though they think not that they *must* do it? 3. I confess I know of no Elders mentioned in Scripture, without Ordination; and do despair of ever seeing it proved that the Apostles did appoint two sorts of Elders, one Ordained and the other not Ordained. The contrary I doubt not to prove by sufficient Induction. 4. Deacons must be Ordained that are inferior to Elders; why then should not Elders be Ordained? 5. Let our Brethren take heed lest they loose all their hold of that shew they have in Scripture for meer-Ruling Elders (I mean *quoad potestatem*, not *quoad exercitium ordinarium*,) if they once disclaim all those as no such Ruling Elders, who were Ordained. It seems then that when the Apostles Ordained Elders in every Church, and when *Titus* was left to Ordain Elders in every City, it was no meer-Ruling Elders that they Ordained, or were appointed to Ordain! 6. I confess I am loath (without more Reasons then I yet know) to give the Invaders of the Ministry so much encouragement, as to tell them, men may ordinarily be Ruling Elders without Ordination!

nation? [illegible] in publike occasionally without Ordination? I meant, more may be said for it. Even some of the most Learned Episcopall Divines think, that by the Bishops allowance private men may preach, and that it belongs more to the Pastor to take care what Doctrine is taught his people, then that himself be the Teacher. And most allow the preaching of Probationers. And if you add to this that there is no need of Ordination to the Office of Church-Governing, I know partly what will follow.

7. Yet a greater doubt is behind, and that is, How we would have these men Ordained? I answer, 1. We have not determined of that: We purposely avoid the point of Ordination; because the distance between the Episcopall Divines and others is well known in that point: and we resolve not to put such controverted Points into our Agreement; lest thereby we necessarily exclude the dissenters. Our business is not now (as is said) to Reconcile differences in judgment: much less to divide from those that differ from us: but to practice unanimously so much as we are agreed in. 2. We leave therefore every man in this to his own Judgment. Those that are for Bishops, may be Ordained by them with a Presbytery, if they can obtain it. Those that are against them, may be Ordained by the Associated Pastors of that Association, the President performing the Action. Those that fear danger from the Law of the Land, if they Ordain without Authority, may send men to some neighbour County that hath Authority. Those that will not use the Name of Ordination, may yet use the Thing: which is nothing but the solemne Designation or Appointment of a fit Person to the Office, by Competent men: which is most fitly accompanied with Prayer and Imposition of hands, where they may be had. 3, To avoid some of these contests, if Deacons only be first Ordained, as I before mentioned, it will prevent the quarrels that some may else be drawn to by difference of Judgment. For many moderate Episcopall men will allow Presbyters to Ordain Deacons, that will not allow them to Ordain Presbyters. As for those that will say, These are no true Officers, nor to be acknowledged (whether Deacons or Presbyters) who were not Ordained by a Bishop; and thereupon will take occasion for a schisme in our Congregations; I shall speak more fully to their satisfaction anon.

9. Though I think few will question the Lawfullness of what is in the 18th Proposition, yet I suppose many will question the Conve-

ſtanding of it). Some will ſay, We ſhall occaſion Diviſions in our Congregations upon our Peoples ſcrupling and refuſing it. But I doubt ſome will have a worſe Objection in their minds; That they ſhall hereby diminiſh their Congregations, or loſe the Peoples affections, and thereby loſe part of their Maintenance. To this point, I ſhall firſt premiſe ſome explication of our meaning, and then give you thoſe Reaſons of our Reſolution herein, which were propounded and debated at our meetings.

1. Underſtand that we are all agreed among our ſelves, that our preſent Pariſhes (I mean not all in *England*, but all ours that joyned in theſe debates) are true particular organized Churches of Chriſt: and therefore that we require not this Profeſſion as a Church-making Covenant, but for Reformation of thoſe that are Churches already; and as a means for our more facile and ſucceſsfull exerciſe of ſome Diſcipline and Government of our Congregations.

2. Yet we thought not meet to put theſe our Principles down in our Agreements: but retain them as our own private thoughts: becauſe being no Fundamentals, nor neer the Foundation, we can agree with thoſe that differ from us in this point of Judgment, ſo they agree in practice: And therefore we have left it ſo open, that any man may ſubſcribe to it, who yet thinketh that we are no true Churches, for want of a Church-Covenant, or for want of a ſolemn Call of our Miniſters; ſobeit theſe perſons, will but acknowledge us to be Churches and Miniſters, *after* our publike Profeſſion, Conſent and Aſſociation; though they will not acknowledge it before.

3. We have not tyed our ſelves or any Brother, to the uſe of any one particular *ſigne* to be required of the People in making this Profeſſion? Whether by ſubſcribing their Names, or lifting up the hand, or ſpeaking their Conſent. For we doubt not but this is an Indifferent thing; That which we require is ſome Expreſſion of Aſſent and Conſent: but how to expreſs it, we leave to the prudence of particular Paſtors who are to guide their own Congregations. For my part I intend to have the Names of all the Members in a Church-Book (the Adult in one Colume and the Infants in another) and that the Members ſhall either write their own Names in it, or conſent that I write them, this Profeſſion being prefixed to be ſubſcribed.

4. We have left it undetermined, Whether the Conſent ſhall be expreſſed particularly man by man, or many together? and whether

they

they shall require such more publique profession of their Faith, or only Consent to it as the Minister pleaseth: We judge that lesser Congregations may be more profitably dealt with then great ones can be: But yet I should advise in the practice, that it be not so huddled up as to elude the Intent and frustrate all: and therefore that some time be taken in doing it; some families coming in one day, and some another. And for those that we have sufficient cause to suspect of gross Ignorance, we have agreed that the Officers first try their Knowledge in private (because many cannot express themselves openly,) and when they are satisfied in it, that we take the Profession of their Consent only in publike; acquainting the Congregation of our satisfaction; who are bound to acquiesce so far in the judgment of their Pastors, when themselves hear the person profess his Consent though he do not express (himself) the Articles that he consenteth to.

2. Our Reasons debated on for this Practice, were thus given in:

Conclus. *We have Reason to require (as things now stand) a more express signification of our Peoples Consent to our Ministry and Ministeriall Actions, and their Membership of their particular Churches.*

Reason 1. We have now by reason of the Licentiousness and Apostasie of the times, more reason to question concerning many of our Members, whether their *hearing* signifie their Consent, 1. Because many profess the contrary. 2. We know some Infidels and others little better, that come to Church sometimes, meerly to avoid the censure of the people, or to please their ears (and this they have acknowledged.) 3. Multitudes in many Parishes will not receive the Lords Supper with us.

Reason 2. The Liberty given in these times hath taken away some other bonds, which formerly were laid on men, to constrain them to acknowledge and submit to the Ministry and Ordinances: and to obey the Church-government that was then in force. We are therefore necessitated to make use of the bond of their own Consent, and to require that it be more express, then formerly it hath been.

Reas. 3. Ministers that were studious of the good of the Flock, did (very many of them) heretofore discern the need of an express consent, that they might have more certainty of the extent of their Charge then the Bounds of a Parish can give them. Only they (truly) maintained that our Churches were true Churches, without a more express Consent then we then had; and that it tended but to the Well-

being

being of a Church, and so to the forme, when the Churches are more expreſs then formerly; But now the impediments of thoſe times are ſo farre removed, as that we have full liberty to chooſe what way of expreſſing our Conſent we ſhall judge beſt; it beſeems us to chooſe the moſt clear, full and ſatisfactory.

Reaſ. 4. Multitudes will be uncapable of thoſe publique, perſonall admonitions, which are in ſeverall caſes our duties, and we have agreed to perform, except they firſt know that we reſolve on this courſe and in the generall do conſent to it. They will take it for an unſufferable injury, to be ſo dealt with, meerly becauſe they live in our Pariſhes, when they never conſented to ſuch a courſe. Nay it ſeems to me, that (at leaſt as things now ſtand) we cannot without their expreſs Conſent effectually uſe any further Diſcipline with them as Church-members, then meerly to keep them from the Lords Supper, which is now ſo common, that it ſeems to them as no diſgrace or penalty. As long as they are continued as Members of our Churches, and have their children baptized, and themſelves joyn with us in Gods ſolemn Praiſes and all other Ordinances, and have freedom from all publique particular Reproofs and Cenſures, being never noted by the Miniſter to be avoided, they little care for forbearing the Sacrament; we ſee thouſands will keep away themſelves without our excluſion. If any can (now) exerciſe any more Diſcipline without their peoples known fore-conſent, let the practice of the Congregations in *England* witneſs. If it can be done, Why is it not? They will refuſe to come near us, anſwer us, or regard any thing we ſay or do.

Reaſ. 5. Let thoſe that better know the Law of the Land conſider, whether it be not neceſſary to our own peace to free us from Law-ſuits, that we have firſt the peoples expreſs Conſent? and whether they may have no Action againſt a Miniſter elſe for naming any man in the Congregation by Reproof, and pronouncing him a perſon to be avoided? and ſo no Diſcipline will be exerciſed.

Reaſ. 6. We have found by long and ſad experience, that the people underſtand not generally the nature of Implicit Profeſſions, and do indeed uſe them often as no Profeſſions at all; and that their meer Implicit Covenanting with God, and obſcure Profeſſions of Faith, not underſtood, and dark worſhippings of God, have tended much to deſtroy the life and being of Chriſtianity, with many that content themſelves with the name; and that nothing is more eaſie, then to turn all Profeſſions, Engagements and Acts of Worſhip, into meer formall ſhews, and deny the power, and deſtroy it thereby: Why then ſhould

we

we rebel [illegible] like to continue them.

*Reaſ.*7. It is evident that [illegible] Profeſſion and Engagement is a ſatisfactory diſcovery of mens minds, and a firmer obliging them to God and their Superiours, and to each other: that ſo their duties, as to all theſe, may be the further performed; and they may more eaſily be convinced of their ſin in caſe of *non*-performance. Now who knoweth not that the more expreſs and ſolemn ſuch Profeſſions and Engagements be, the fitter they are for the attainment of their ends? And that which is beſt fitted to the end, is the beſt means.

*Reaſ.*8. It is agreeable to the excellent nature of the Truths and Duties of Chriſtianity, and the great importance of ſuch buſineſſes (as to the Church and the ſouls of men) to be as *open* and *full* as is poſſible in the *owning* and acknowledging them. Truth ſuffers moſt by being obſcured; and Duty, by being but ſuperficially, ignorantly and reſervedly owned and performed: And how much muſt the Church and mens ſouls hereby ſuffer! God loves the moſt open Confeſſions.

*Reaſ.*9. Many of the Separation do (on this ground eſpecially) deny that our Pariſhes are true Churches, becauſe they are not tied by Covenant or any expreſs Conſent into a Body Politick. On the ſame ground alſo they deny our Paſtors to be true Miniſters, becauſe they have not the expreſs Call or Conſent of the people. Though I doubt not but this is their Errour, yet the ſatisfying of ſo many exceptious Brethren, and the removing of that which may ſtill occaſion their offence and hurt, and the continuance of Separation and the Churches diviſions, is ſurely a work well worth our performing, and which we ſhould endeavour as far as poſſibly we may.

*Reaſ.*10. The ſame want of expreſs Conſent is an offence to our Brethren of the Congregationall way, and hindreth our cloſure with them. And though ſome think that this is rather a diſſwaſive, and that we ſhould the rather ſhun it, leſt we ſhould ſeem to approve of their Church making Covenant, and ſo to recede from our former principles, yet I think this concluſion is much contrary to the Scripture, and the practice of *Paul*, in Circumciſing *Timothy*, in Preaching privately to them of reputation, *Gal.*2.2. and becoming all things to all men; a Jew to the Jews, and a Greek to the Greeks. The love of our Brethren, and of the Churches Unity and Peace, ſhould make godly men condeſcend in a greater matter then this, as long as we all acknowledge it a thing lawfull.

(yea even the Bishops themselves:) if not that they might Reject unworthy Bishops when chosen,) and that Discipline was exercised before them, expredly and more rigorously then we pretend to, is well known to all that are acquainted with Antiquity. See for one *Cyprian Epist.* 68. *p.* 200, 201, 202. (*Edit. Goulartij:*) and see more in *Blondell. de Jure plebis in Regim. Eccles.* And for solemn profession of the Faith, it hath been of long and constant use, as in all parts of the Christian world, so in our own Congregations in *England*, where the People were every Lords day to Profess their Faith, by standing up at the Recitall of the Creed. And the Sacraments are Seals of the Covenant: and therefore all that receive the Sacraments must enter or renew their Covenant.

Reas. 12. Those (moderate men) that are most against Church-Covenantings, speak only against the Necessity of them; but the Lawfulness they deny not, no nor the Convenience in case of liberty; no nor the Necessity of the Thing, but only of the Circumstantials, and manner of expression, and ends by some affixed. They require that the People expresly Consent to the Choice of their Minister, and that they be examined before the Sacrament of their knowledge in the Fundamentals. This differs from what we propound, but in circumstances. And I should think it more seasonable and convenient, to be satisfied of our Peoples spirituall sufficiency, and capacity for Church-Communion, at our first Reformation of a disordered Church, or in a well-ordered Church, at their first transition out of the state of Imperfect Infant Members, and admission into the number of Adult members, (and after this, to suppose their Right good to Communion and Church priviledges, till it be on sufficient grounds disproved, excepted against or questioned by any,) then to try them as only for admission to the Lords Supper, suffering them to live quietly in the Reputation of Members, so they will not come to the Table of the Lord.

These are the Reasons, for substance, that were given in; on consideration whereof we resolved on this Practice: which I have therefore repeated, that others may consider of them, who else might through misunderstanding us, question our way.

Lastly, Let me add this: Our first Conclusion was only, of the Necessity (in these times) of the Peoples acknowledging us to be their

their Pastors. 2. Not our Duty. 3. Not therefore [illegible] Duty. 4. And especially cannot exercise any [illegible] Power. But for the Publike Profession and Covenant with God, we take in it, only as very fit to go along with the former; that men might be engaged to God before they be engaged to their Overseers; and might first be clearly discovered Members of the Universall Church, before they profess themselves Members of a particular Church.

We did at the same time answer two great Objections. 1. Of those that say, The Apostles required no such expres Consent.

*Ans.*1. That Negative cannot be proved, though it were not written that they required it. 2. The Christians of those times gave a most full expression of their Consent to their particular Ministers, and to be Members of their particular Churches.

1. In that before the Church the Apostles appointed them Elders in every Church, whom they openly Accepted and Reverenced.

2. For Deacons, they bid the Church choose seven men whom they might Ordain.

3. The People voluntarily (when no Magistrate did constrain them) did continue in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and breaking of Bread and Prayer, and submitted to their Pastors as those that were over them and Governed them in the Lord: and without the Peoples expres Consent, none could then have Ruled them, by meer Ecclesiatticall Rule.

4. Remember that all this was done in times of persecution, when it hazarded their lives to acknowledge the Ministry, and to frequent Church Assemblies; which made the Apostle *Heb.*10.25. exhort them not to forsake the Assembling of themselves together, as some (for fear) did. Now this is a fuller signification of Consent to the Ministry and to Church membership, then dwelling in a Parish is; or the meeting to hear a Sermon is, when either Law or Custom brings them, and they discover by many wayes, that they either know not what a Church is, or what the Ministers Power is, or submit not, and Consent not to it. Further peruse the Scriptures that we have cited in the Profession.

5. Remember yet, that I maintain that God doth in Scripture require only [*Consent signified*;] but hath not tied us to this or that particular signe for [signifying it:] but having given us generall Rules that all things be done to Edification, Decently, *&c.* he hath left it to humane Prudence to determin of the particular signe (whether voice,

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2. The other great Objection was from the many Inconveniences that may follow; in that it will seem so new and strange to our People. To which I answer; Practice but the Rules which we have agreed on in the manner of doing it, and all the Inconveniences will be avoided, except those that must needs be expected by all that will be faithfull in the Ministry, and will not do the work of the Lord deceitfully.

Yet observe that we have left those Brethren at Liberty to neglect this, who will manifest to the Associated Ministers, that they can better order their Congregations and exercise Discipline, without requiring this express Consent, then with it. Also that we resolve not that those must do it immediatly, whose People are not yet ready or capable, either through prejudice, ignorance or other impediments. *Ignatius Ep. ad Polycarp.* bids, hold frequent Assemblies, and enquire after all by Name: servants and maids, *&c.* must not be disclaimed.

10. Concerning the 20th Proposition about Constant Meetings, and the Rules of Association agreed on therein; observe that we meddle not with that great Question, Whether the Ministers of one Church are to exercise a proper Government over another? But laying aside the Question of Classicall Regiment, we only determin of what all neighbour Ministers and Churches are bound to, either in common duty to one another as Christians (as to give a Reason of our Hope to those that ask it: to satisfie an offended Brother, to Love one another, *&c.*) or else as Ministers; and especially for the Unity and Peace of the Churches; which every man ought to use his utmost skill, industry and power, to attain and maintain.

So much for the explication of the Propositions.

A brief Explication of some Passages in the Profession.

I Intend not an Exposition of this Profession, which would be to write a Body of Theologie. We have put it all in as plain termes as we could, that it might need the less explication. I had once thought

thought to have given you a Synopsis or Anatomical Scheme of it, that by discerning our Method, you might discern our Reasons for the location and order of each part and sentence: but considering that the People, for whose sake I write, cannot make use of such a thing; and that the Judicious can easily Analyse it all of themselves: I will set that pass.

1. I must give you to understand, that the Reasons of our prefixing the Preface were these: 1. That our People may see the Grounds and Necessity of our Practice. 2. That we may not be thought to go on their Grounds, that take our Churches for no Churches before an expres Covenant, superadded to all former signs of Consent; or that we may not be judged to go about the gathering of new Churches where were none before; when indeed we do all this but in Reformation of those that are Churches already. 3. That our People may be the more engaged, while they consent to our Reasons as well as our Articles.

2. Observe further, that yet we shall not refuse Communion or Association with any Church, Pastor or Person that meerly refuseth our Preface, and will joyn with us in our Profession, though on other grounds: as *e.g.* if he take our Churches for no Churches before this Profession have made them Churches.

3. We shall not therefore be peremptory in urging the Preface on any of our People (no more then on neighbour-Ministers;) nor urge them to use it as they must do the Profession: though we desire as full a Union as may be had, and therefore that none will causelesly dissent.

4. For the Profession it self, understand, that we distinguish between that which makes a man a Member of the Universall Church, (which must go first) and that which makes or declares a man to be a Member of a Particular Church. And therefore we have first put down so much as is necessary to the former (largely, as being of most weight:) and then put down that which is necessary to the later (briefly.)

5. That Faith which every Christian must have and profess, consisteth 1. In the Assent of his Understanding to the Truth of Fundamentals. 2. And in the Consent of his Will: 1. To the Relations between God and him. 2. And the Benefits following those Relations; which both are offered. 3. And to the Duties commanded, on the ground of those Relations. 4. Especially those Duties which are made by God the Condition of our Receiving the said Rela-

Wills, for [illegible] therefore we have thought it necessary (having so many Scripture warrant) to require distinctly a more express Profession: 1. Of Assent to the Truth. 2. Of the foresaid Consent: the expressness being no way inconvenient, but in our judgements very needfull

6. Understand that for the former part, the Profession of Assent to the Fundamentals, we do make use of the common Creed called the Apostles, as our ground and text; and we superadde our own, by way of Comment or Exposition. If any shall charge us with novelty or contempt of Antiquity in making the Ancient insufficient, I shall thus prove the charge to be unjust. 1. We highly esteem Antiquity, and especially the ancient Creed: and we take it to be sufficient to them that understand what it implieth, as well as what it expresseth: And therefore we continue it, and never desire to lay it by: no nor one word of it do we alter; not so much as the questioned word, of descending into Hell. 2. Yet we suppose that a full Creed should expres the Fundamentals, and that all things necessary to salvation are not expressed in that ancient Creed. Implicitly the whole Profession is in those three words, *Matth.* 28. 20. *Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost:* Shall we therefore say that no more should be expressed? or accuse the ancient Creed for expressing more? 3. It is the Bible that we take for our present Rule, and we have fully proved both the Verity and Absolute Necessity of what we require, by clear Texts of Scripture. And if the Creed contain not that which the Scripture make necessary to Salvation, is it not as safe to say that the Creed hath too little, as that the Bible hath too much? Though for my part I will say neither: because that Creed might be sufficient for former times, when men understood what was Implyed, as well as what was Expressed: and may yet suffice, on supposition that men be taught what it implies, and will profes that Implyed Doctrine by it self as an exposition. 4. You may as well accuse the Universall Church, as us, in this. If they did not accuse the old Creed of Insufficiency, when the Council of *Nice* formed theirs, and the Council of *Constantinople* added to that, and when many other Councils have had their proper Confessions, as most of the Reformed Churches also have had; why should we be thought more guilty in this then they? Sure *Athanasius*

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[illegible] Councils of [illegible] desirable additions [illegible] we are so moderate in this point, and so [illegible] of enlarging our Creed beyond the bounds of Scripture, that we will not break Communion with any (I speak for my self and those whose minds I know) who will take only the Apostles Creed, on these two Conditions: 1. So they will add the following Profession of *Consent*, without which a bare Assent will do little good, seeing the Devils, saith *James*, beleeve and tremble. 2. So be it they make it appear that it is not to hide any Heresie, that they refuse our explicatory Profession; and that they are not ignorant of those necessary Truths which our Profession doth contain. 6. If any say, We should have made use then of some other of the ancient Creeds. I answer, We have made use only of the most ancient and unquestionable; not formed by the Councill at *Nice*; but by the Counsel of the Holy Ghost, and delivered expressely in the Scriptures: not mixed with our conceits, but given you in Gods expres words.

7. The things that we thought should be fullier expressed then in the ancient Creed, are these: 1. A man may beleeve all expressed in the ancient Creed, and yet beleeve that there is a hundred Gods: For it expresseth not God to be the Only God, yet doubtless this is implied. 2. That Creed may be professed, and yet men deny Gods Infiniteness, his Omniscience, Goodness, Mercy, Justice, Preservation, Government of all, *&c.* yet doubtless these are all implied in the term [God.] 3. A man may beleeve all that is expressed in the ancient Creed, and yet deny, not only Original sin, but that ever man did fall from God and Happiness, or ever stood in need of a Redeemer. 4. The ancient Creed telleth us not that Christ is God, and therefore may be taken by an Arian. 5. It tels us not that ever Christ was the Redeemer of the world nor of any in it: nor that ever he died for sin. 6. No, nor that he died for us: It only telleth us that he was crucified, dead and buried; but telleth us neither why, nor for whom, nor for what: yet no doubt but it implieth all these things, which it expresseth not. It telleth us of beleeving the forgiveness of sins, but it telleth us not whether they are forgiven for Christs sake, or with any respect to his sacrifice as the cause; yet no doubt it implied this. 7. It doth not so much as profes that Christ himself was without sin. 8. It so obscurely mentioneth the Article of the Holy Ghost, not expressing his Relation to us, or works for us, Miracles

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[illegible] unity of the Ancient Fathers Creeds [illegible] see how we agree [illegible] One you may see in *Origens Princ.* some Comment. Leonard Parker (or *Stanford*) *de Deſcenſu* will direct you to more. One brief one I will venture to ſet down, becauſe it is ſo ancient, and ſo agreeable to the Scripture. *Tertull. de præſcript. cap.*13. *Regula eſt autem Fides, ut jam hinc, quid credamus profiteamur: illâ ſcilicet quâ creditur [Unum omnium Deum eſſe, nec alium præter mundi conditorem; qui univerſa de nihilo produxerit, per verbum ſuum primò omnium emiſſum. Id verbum Filium ejus Appellatum, in Nomine Dei variè viſum Patriarchis, in Prophetis ſemper auditum, poſtremò delatum ex ſpiritu Dei Patris, & Virtute, in Virginem Mariam, carnem factum in utero ejus, & ex eâ natum hominem, & eſſe Jeſum Chriſtum: Exinde prædicaſſe Novam Legem & Novam Promiſſionem Regni Cœlorum: Virtutes feciſſe: Fixum Cruci: Tertia die Reſurrexiſſe: In Cœlos ereptum ſedere ad dextram Patris: Miſiſſe Vicariam Vim Spiritûs Sancti qui credentes agat: Venturum cum claritate ad ſumendos ſanctos in Vitæ æternæ & promiſſionum cœleſtium fructum; & ad prophanos judicandos igni perpetuo, facta utriuſq; partis Reſuſcitatione cum carnis Reſurrectione.] Hac Regula a Chriſto ut probabitur inſtituta, nullas habet apud nos quæſtiones, niſi quas hæreſes inferunt, & quæ hæreticos facinnt.*

Vide & Irenæum l.1.c.4. & l.2.c.2.

8. We thought it neceſſary to reduce all the Fundamentals or Articles of the Creed to three heads, *viz.* the Father, Son, holy Ghoſt, and their Relations and Works. Becauſe Chriſt himſelf in the Baptiſmall Inſtitution compriſeth all in theſe three: *Mat.*28.19,20. And many Learned men think, that the Churches common Creed was no larger at firſt (as *Parker de Deſcenſu* at large endeavours to prove; and *Lud. Crocius Syntag.*&c.) or at leaſt that thence it had its riſe.

9. Our greateſt care of all hath been, to give you the Scripture ſenſe in the Scripture phraſe; that ſo no good Chriſtian may have any ſeeming cauſe to ſcruple the Profeſſing it: and none might be able to deny it, without plain denying Gods own Word. The Neceſſity of ſo doing is ſo evident, and our Reaſons againſt departing from the letter of the Text, are ſo many and obvious, that I will not trouble you with them. I pray you peruſe Learned Dr *Staughtons*

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11. We thought it meet to ſubjoyn the full proof of every word from the Scripture, that it might be paſt controverſie with all believers. Concerning the Texts cited I muſt deſire you to obſerve, that every Text doth not expreſs the very words that we have put down, but all expreſs the ſenſe and ſumme of the words; ſo that I think ſcarce two ſyllables can be found that are not expreſly in the words of Scripture, which contain any matter that is liable to controverſie. If you finde ten Texts cited for one thing, if the words be not in nine of them, it is ſufficient if they be in the tenth; and therefore I muſt intreat you, if you doubt, to peruſe them all. And let not the number offend you: If you need them not, they are no trouble to you: Few of them, I think, or none, are impertinent: A concent of many Texts may convince more then one ſingle Text: at leaſt it will be uſefull to have ſo many Texts at hand, for the convincing any others of any Article of the Faith, though you doubt not your ſelves. Only the particular Application of ſome parts of the laſt Branch, *viz.* [*our Conſent that ſuch a man ſhall be our Paſtor, and that we will be Members of this or that particular Church:*] cannot be proved in termes from Scripture, but by conſequence: For who can expect that Scripture ſhould name the perſons of our Paſtors, or the places of our habitation?

12. As for the ſenſe of ſome few of the termes that may poſſibly be miſunderſtood, I ſhall give you my own thoughts, but briefly paſſing over all the reſt.

1. In the firſt Part, when we ſubjoyn [*the Father*] to [*one only God*] we do not exclude the Son and holy Ghoſt: for we afterwards expreſs the contrary. But we ſpeak 1. In the language of the Scripture, as the Texts cited will inform you. 2. And in the ordinary language of Divines, who therefore call the Father *Fundamentum Trinitatis.*

2. In mentioning Gods Being (which we put firſt) and his Primary Attributes, we apply the word [*Infinite*] to them all. And by the Infiniteneſs of his Being, we mean his Eternity and Immenſity: (That he is not a Body but a Spirit, not viſible, palpable, *&c.* as bodies are,

of his Holiness, Righteousness, Truth, Goodness, Grace to his Creatures, and in a word, whatsoever kind of Good which we may conceive of in Analogie to Morall Virtues in man, which lye in the perfection of his Will (as by Infiniteness of his Wisdome we mean all his Intellectuall perfections.) By the Infinite Power of God, we mean his Omnipotency, and all the perfection of that in God, which bears Analogie with the Executive Virtue in man. For as in describing the perfections of man, we must first express his Being as the Foundation, and then reduce all his Principall Virtues to the Perfections of his Intellect, Will and Executive Power; so must we be forced for our weak apprehensions, to do by the Incomprehensible God, while we can know him but in this Glass. Next we thought meet to mention his Principall Works, and Relations thereupon: 1. As to all the Creatures: of whom he is 1. The Maker, 2. Preserver, 3. Disposer: 2. As to the Rationall Creature in particular: of whom he is the Lord: which terme we use in the Scripture sense as it comprehendeth both his Absolute Propriety in us, and his Absolute Soveraign Rectorship over us all: To which Relations of his it is that his perfect Justice is to be subjoyned, and his Mercy as to the most eminent exercise of it. God must be considered as Rector, before he is considered as a most Just and Mercifull Rector.

3. In the second Part, We thought meet first to express the Disease and then the Remedy. The first lay in Sin the Cause, and its effects: which as to our loss is, in falling from God and Happiness (our true God:) and the state to which we fell is that threefold misery, Gods wrath, the Curse of the Law, and the Power of Satan. Though God hath not wrath as man hath, yet there is some Cause of our sufferings in God, which man can have no fitter conceiving or expression of, then under the notion of wrath: and therefore we must do as Scripture doth, in distinguishing between Gods wrath and the effects of it, and not make them all one. When we say, Man is fallen under the Power of the Devill, we include, the Power of Sin, and the Flesh, and the World: for these are but Satans materials, baits or instruments. A double Power of Satan we mean: both as he is the Cause of Sin, and as he is the Cause of punishment, and therefore is said to have the

next ſubjoined. So did the Church in Tertullians dayes, as you may ſee by his [*Præſcript. contra Hæreſes.*]

In the third Part, we thought it meet to be larger on the Belief of the holy Ghoſt, then other Creeds are. For doubtleſs as it is not only the eſſence and perſon of the Father and the Son that are to be Believed; but alſo the Relation and works of the Father as Creator, and of the Son as Redeemer; ſo is it the Relation and works of the holy Ghoſt alſo that muſt be Believed to Salvation. And if the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt be ſo deſperate, doubtleſs Belief in the holy Ghoſt is as neceſſary. And indeed I fear moſt Chriſtians do not underſtand or conſider well this part of their Creed, what it is to believe in the holy Ghoſt. I think the ancient Creed which I cited from *Tertullian* expreſſeth it excellently [*Miſiſſe Vicariam vim Spiritus Sancti qui credentes agat.*] Its like God would have kept the myſtery of the Trinity unknown to us, and never have made it the object of our faith, if the ſeverall perſons had not ſtood in thoſe Relations to us, and done thoſe works for us, that muſt needs be known. I think *Tertullians* termes are an exact interpretation of the work [*Paraclete,*] it is called *Vim Vicariam*, becauſe Chriſt being perſonally in Heaven, hath ſent the holy Ghoſt to do the reſt of his work on earth, and carry on his Cauſe, and maintain his Intereſt till he return, againſt the world, fleſh and Devil, which is to be Chriſts Advocate, or properly his Agent [*qui Credentes Agat:*] and that is two wayes, that he Actuateth Believers: 1. Extraordinarily; by Inſpiring the Prophets and Apoſtles, and cauſing them to work Miracles and ſpeak with tongues, *&c.* And doubtleſs this is a moſt principall part of our Belief in the holy Ghoſt; *viz.* To Believe, that the Spirit which ſpake by the Apoſtles, and by which Believers did ſpeak with tongues and work Miracles, was the very Spirit of God, even the holy Ghoſt, and not an evil deceiving Spirit, (which they that affirm blaſpheme the holy Ghoſt:) and conſequently that the many glorious works and gifts of this Spirit, are an infallible ſeal to the Truth of the Teſtimony and Doctrine of Chriſt. For you muſt note the order of each part of our Creed. The Father is to be Believed in as the firſt Cauſe and End of man; and as his Happineſs. The Son is to be Believed in as the only way to

and ſanctifying his people. This is Gods laſt and great witneſs, which muſt convince the world, or elſe they ſhall have no greater to convince them. 2. And the holy Ghoſt muſt alſo be believed in, in regard of his more ordinary [Actuating of Believers]; and that is, as our Guide, Illuminator, Sanctifier and Aſſiſter againſt our ſpiritual enemies in our Conflicts, and Comforter in our diſtreſſes.

In mentioning the Spirits indwelling and working (which becauſe they are more undoubted Scripture terms, we put in ſtead of *Tertullians* [*Qui credentes agat*]) we make Believers the ſubject: Becauſe though faith it ſelf be the gift of God, yet there is ſo much greater and more eminent grace given after faith, and on condition of believing, then the Grace is which enableth us to believe, that it is only the giving of that greater meaſure (and extraordinary Gifts) which in the New Teſtament is uſually called the Giving of the Spirit: For (as Mr *Th. Hooker* and others expreſs it) the Spirit in working Faith doth but, as it were, make his way into the ſoul, and then dwelleth and worketh there afterwards; as (ſaith he) ſome Birds firſt make their way into a hard tree by ſtocking a hole in it, and afterward make their neſts and lay their young there. Here note well, that we thought meet before we expreſſed the particular works of the Spirit in Believers, to mention firſt the relative change of their ſtates, which in order goeth between their believing, and their further ſanctification: Theſe we have expreſſed in four terms. The firſt in order is our conjunction to Chriſt as our Head, called by Divines, our Union with him. The ſecond is our Membership in the univerſal Church which is his body. The third is our Pardon or Juſtification. The fourth is our Adoption: Where note 1. That we call not theſe [the Works of the Spirit] but put them in as in a Parentheſis, between our believing and the works of the indwelling Spirit. 2. Yet we chooſe rather to put them in this part of our Profeſſion then the former, becauſe as no man hath right to theſe benefits but through Faith, ſo though they are not the effects of that Faith (which the Spirit worketh) yet are they conſequents of it by vertue of Chriſts Promiſe or New Law; and though faith be not the cauſe of them in ſtrict ſenſe, yet it is the condition of our Right in them. And there-

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we intend here the real change commonly called Sanctification; and also the Relation that thereto followes, of being regenerate, sanctified, dedicated, peculiar people. And we take Sanctification, not for that first work commonly called Vocation, wherein Faith and Repentance are first wrought; but as the Scripture takes it for the following effect of the Spirit dwelling in us. How the Spirit dwels or worketh in us, we presume not to define. Further note that we describe the exercise of this sanctification: 1. In respect to the state *from which* we are changed, where we judged it necessary to imitate the Church, which hath alwaies in Baptism required a renouncing of the world, flesh and devil; and therefore (Scripture making it necessary to salvation) we think it requisite that this be in our Creed: Also we rather put in [Mortifying the flesh, and overcoming the world and the devil] then meerly striving against them, both because the first is the common Scripture language, and because it is not all striving, but that which ends in overcoming that is saving. 2. As for the state *to which* sanctification brings us, we thought meet 1. To put down the manner and nature of the inclination it self, in the Apostles words [*Zealous of good works*] lest any should think that the externall work is all. And for the exercise of it, we distribute it according to the Decalogue: 1. Into serving God in holiness, which hath chief respect to the first Table. 2. And in righteousness, by which we specially mean the duties of the second Table. 3. Yet we thought it necessary to adde [the special love of the Saints, and communion with them, and the hope of Christs coming and Everlasting Life] not as if we thought the Decalogue extended not to these; but because Christ in the Gospel hath in a singular and eminent sort required them, and made them duties so specially Evangelical, and necessary in particular: and the ancient Creed had [the Communion of Saints] which therefore we ought not to leave out.

Note also, that though Faith, Love and Obedience be mentioned both in the second part and in the third, yet it is no vain repetition: For in the second part they are mentioned, as they appertain to Christs Legislation and Judgement, and are required of man in order to his happiness: but in the third part they are mentioned as actually conferred by the holy Ghost. So Everlasting Life is mentioned in the first part, as given (*quoad jus*) by the Promise, and as that

Profeſſion of Aſſent, (namely) to the ſame things which the Underſtanding receives as true (according with the truth of enunciations concerning them) and which the Will receives as Good. 2. I take the Truth and Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture, to be plainly included in the Article of our believing in the holy Ghoſt (as I have ſaid) and therefore we may well require that it be conſented to.

Laſtly, Underſtand alſo that when you promiſe to God, to take his Word and Law as your Rule, you ſhew hereby, that this Law muſt be ſtudied that you may underſtand it: For how can it be the Rule of your Faith and Life which you underſtand not, nor meditate on, that you may underſtand it? *Pſal.*1.2,3. And therefore you may ſee, that it is not enough to learn this Creed or Profeſſion, but you muſt ſtudy the Bible, whence this is taken.

Eſpecially remember that it is here ſuppoſed that you underſtand the ten Commandements, which ſhew you what is your duty, and alſo the great Commands of the Goſpel, for Faith, Repentance, forgiving wrongs, loving the brethren, and loving enemies, *&c.* which Chriſt hath eminently ſet his ſignature on. All this is implied alſo, in your Promiſe of ſincere Obedience. Alſo the duties of hearing the Goſpel preached, of inſtructing your families, *Deut.*6.6. of conſtant and fervent Prayer, of the uſe of the Lords Supper, *&c.* are here implied: Thoſe that promiſe Obedience, and yet live ungodly, with untaught, ungoverned prayerleſs families, and in the neglect of known duties, do but aggravate their ſins by the addition of Promiſe-breaking. *It is therefore very neceſſary that the Creed or Profeſſion of Faith, the ten Commandements, and the Lords Prayer (which is the Directory for Prayer) be learned of all men:* and it is neceſſary that they underſtand the Doctrine of the Sacraments.

As for the laſt (our Conſent to particular Miniſters and Church-membership,) we have given you thoſe Scriptures from whence you may ſee it proved, that ſuch a Conſent there muſt be; though the particular places and perſons (as is ſaid before) are not there named, nor will any wiſe man expect they ſhould.

To conclude; I will tell you in a word more, what uſe we intend to make of this Profeſſion. 1. When any Infants are to be baptized,

I ſhall

Affent and Conſent: [illegible] have right to Baptiſme, and that they engage their children into the Church: and therefore I ſhall require to them the Apoſtles Creed, with our annexed Profeſſion of Conſent, omitting our explicatory Profeſſion of Aſſent, as implied in the old Creed (becauſe we would in Baptiſme be as contracted as may well be.) 2. When any Perſon doth ſignifie his deſire to paſſe out of the Number of Infant-members, into the ſtate and number of Adult-members, I ſhall require of them an open Profeſſion of the whole (both of the old Creed, and our larger Scripture Profeſſion.) 3. At the firſt Reforming (now) of our preſent Congregations, I ſhall deſire all to Profeſs the whole, and endeavour to ſee that they competently underſtand the ſenſe of thoſe words which they ſpeak. I will not affirm every word in this Profeſſion to be of abſolute Neceſſity to Salvation. But I will ſay this, that I know not many (if any) Doctrines in it, which I dare ſay a man may deny, and yet be ſaved (among our ordinary hearers.) And we thought it far ſafer to put in a word more then is of *abſolute* Neceſſity (ſeeing even that may be yet of inferior neceſſity,) then to leave out one word, which may prove of ſuch Neceſſity; and ſo mens ſalvation may be hazarded, by the not receiving it. Yet where it is clear that any word was not of abſolute Neceſſity, we were very ſtudious of omitting it, deſiring much in a Creed all poſſible brevity, that may not hazard mens ſouls. 4. Underſtand that for our Profeſſion of particular Church-memberſhip, and ſubmiſſion to our Guides, we intend never to offer it to our People, but this one time (without ſome neceſſity which we do not foreſee;) it being not matter to be ſo oft made uſe of: But the Profeſſion of our Faith for Aſſent and Conſent, we ſhall frequently make uſe of, as is expreſſed. *So much for Explication.*

Objections Anſwered.

BEſides what is ſaid that way in the foregoing Explication of our Agreement, I ſhall briefly anſwer ſuch Objections, as the ſeverall differing parties may raiſe againſt our courſe, and their joyning with us.

1. Some

Discipline, they will have some at all adventures more pray for the discovery of the right way of Discipline, it must be but as a Gentleman that I have heard of in the Weaver, prayed every day that God would open his eyes to shew him which side would get the better, and that he would take for the better side. I confess I take not these men to be fit for our Association, and therefore will not argue the case with them, but leave them to the Parliament for their reward, seeing the Parliament is esteemed as their chief Lord and Master. If the Parliaments License or Toleration may serve all dividers for the executing of their designes against the Unity and Peace of the Church, and for setting up of false waies, and yet will not serve these men (without a command) for Uniting and Reforming: It seems others are faster friends to Satan and Heresie, then they are to Christ and Verity.

2. Others (of the same nest) think that it is in vain to attempt any thing without the Authority of the Magistrate, for people will but despise us, What will they care for our avoiding them? or who will avoid them at our perswasions? It will be but *inane fulmen*, if the power of the Sword do not both prepare respect to it, and also second it.

I take these men also to be not only unworthy an answer, but unworthy to be Ministers of the Gospel; who have so base an esteem of the Gospel, and the power which they have received; and dare think that it is such a leaden or wooden Sword which Christ hath put into their hands; when both the Scriptures which they preach, and the Churches experience might have taught them that these spiritual weapons are powerfull and mighty? or if they prove at any time ineffectuall, let them suspect the ill managing of them. For ought I know these men might as well on their own grounds give over Preaching, till the Magistrate will force men to Pray, Meditate, Believe, Repent, and do every duty that they perswade men to (were it not for a more effectuall argument called *Lucrum.*) What did the poor Church do for so many hundred years, when Magistrates were against them? and yet Discipline was acted in such rigour, as would not now be endured to be once attempted? Hath Christ given you the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, and cannot you use them without

such Pastors, and take Christs Authority to be ruled for casting them to their work, and do not make the Magistrates their God. Though yet I shall as freely acknowledge the sinfulness of the Magistrates power in seconding Christs commands, as another; and doubt not but it is a very easie task to manifest the sinfulness of their neglect herein.

3. Others Object, that we shall but disturb and discompose our people, and occasion many to hold off from joyning with us, and others to separate when they finde themselves touched by our closer proceedings: and is it not better to let them go on in peace as they do?

Ans. 1. When the strong man armed keeps the house, the things that he possesseth are in peace. Satan maintains his interest in Souls, and States and Churches, most effectually, when he can stablish it in peace. Most sinners are quiet in the state of sin, if you would let them alone and not disturb them. The house that's fallen down, lieth still; and will you not re-edifie it for fear of stirring it? 2. Are our Congregations in a state to be rested in, or no? That is the Question to be determined. And I prove that they are not: 1. Our people live in the constant practice of apparent sin, by having and holding Communion with those, whose Communion the Scripture commandeth them to avoid. 2. This is become a Church-sin, which is more hainous and dangerous then private and personall sins. 3. Ministers live in constant apparent sin, not only in continuing the same Communion, but in neglecting of a great part of their duty; never once acquainting the vilest whoremaster, drunkard, or other evil doer, of his duty to forbear Church-communion, and his danger in usurping it (I mean personally, that he may apply it;) or never acquainting the Church with their duty to avoid all familiarity and communion with that man, nor once requiring them to do it. 4. Hereby multitudes of evil doers are not only encouraged or hardened in sinning, but also deluded to think their state good enough for salvation, as long as they are admitted into Christian communion, or taken for Members of the Church. 5. Hereby all the great necessary duties of private and open Reproof and Admonition are neglected also by our people: For when they see that they cannot proceed in it to tell the Church, that he may be admonished by the Pastors, they think it

Prayers, Praise, Sacraments, &c. [illegible] grant. I do not say that the godly [illegible] Church [illegible] for the presence of a wicked man at the Sacrament, when we have discharged our duty, to prevent or hinder it; For it is not bare presence that makes Communion: In a moral sense it is no Communion, if we disclaim and disown the person, though he sit among us; for this breaks familiarity as well as locall removall. If I be constrained to eat privately, with a drunkard (either through necessity of hunger, or others violence, &c.) I break not *Pauls* precept [*With such a one no not to eat,*] if I do but declare that I renounce communion or familiarity with him. But when we do not our duty the case is otherwise. 8. Hereby many Ministers (that do keep them from the Lords Supper, and do no more) do give occasion to the enemies of the Ministry to say we deal self-contradictingly; to deny the Sacrament to those whom we take for Church-members, or suffer to continue Church-members year after year; and to whom we grant all other priviledges of Communion: Whenas we are as much bound to avoid all private familiarity with them, and to require the Church to do the like. 9. Hereby we do hainously reproach and dishonour the Christian profession, by suffering obstinate rebels to go under the name of Christians and Church-members. 10. Hereby we occasion the infection of our flocks, and the increase of wickedness, by keeping up the credit of the wicked, or keeping them from that discredit which Christ would have them undergo; and by suffering good and bad to have equal familiarity, converse and society; and so a little leaven may leaven the whole lump. 11. Hereby we hinder the recovery of the wicked, which by Christs means of shaming them might be furthered. 12. Lastly, Hereby we cause not only our Churches to be reproached, as having in them constant drunkards, whoremongers, railers, &c. (nay we know not well, who is a member and who not) but also multitudes of tender well-meaning Christians to separate from them, as common sinks of all pollution. — *It is because We will not make that meet and necessary separation, Which Christ requireth regularly and authoritatively as Guides of the Church, that so many do make irregular sinfull separations.* The great fault is in us, and we do

but

of further Diſcipline, and why we may not comfort our ſelves with that ſtate that our Churches are now in; we thought we do keep open ungodly ones from the Lords Supper. (I ſpeak not of thoſe Churches that are well ordered, and know their members, and exerciſe Diſcipline.)

More particularly, 1. Some Brethren of the Claſſicall way may poſſibly Object, that joyning with us in this way, may ſeem to ſignifie a diſlike of the Reſolutions of the Aſſembly, or a Conſent to the undoing of what they have done. *Anſ.* There is no ground for this ſcruple: For we do not diſclaim or condemn the judgement or way of any party, by taking up at preſent with what all are agreed in. A preſent forbearance of the uſe of full Claſſicall Government, is no rejecting it. We did in this County ſeek for Authority from the Parliament many years ago, for the eſtabliſhing of the Presbyterian Government; and all our endeavours were fruſtrate. And many Brethren that make this Objection, do Preach themſelves without the exerciſe of the Presbyterian Government. For becauſe they live not in *London, Lancaſhire, Shropſhire,* where that Government was authorized by Parliament, therefore they will not uſe it: And ſo ſome of them for many years have forborn all adminiſtration of the Lords Supper, and others adminiſter it without any exerciſe of Diſcipline: And may not we as lawfully exerciſe ſo much as all are agreed in, as they may forbear all?

Obj. But why may not you as well ſet up the Claſſicall Government punctually as do what you do? *Anſ.* We are not all of one minde; and thoſe of us that are for the Claſſicall Government, do not think thoſe parts of it which we here omit and forbear, to be of ſo great neceſſity or moment, as for the preſent uſe of it, to disjoyn and divide from all our Brethren of a different Judgement. We take our ſelves bound to do much for the Unity and Peace of the Churches: Beſides, being many of us at a loſſe in ſeveral controverted Points of Diſcipline, we think the Amicable Union and Aſſociation of Brethren, where all things may be frequently and plainly debated, will be the likelieſt way to ſatisfie and rectifie us in thoſe controverted Points. In the mean time, you may joyn with us in going ſo far as we can go Unanimouſly, without diſclaiming, yea or forbearing

dividing from us.

As for the Objection about the Neceſſity of Ordaining Elders, it is anſwered before.

And whereas it may be Objected, that we do allow a ſingle Miniſter to name offendors, and to charge it on the peoples conſciences to avoid Communion with them, which only a Presbytery is authorized to do, I anſwer, 1. We deſire each Church may have a Presbytery, and then we are agreed. 2. The Brethren of the Claſſicall Way do allow a ſingle Paſtor to pronounce the ſentence of Excommunication it ſelf, ſo be it he have the advice and conſent of a Presbytery. And to avoid all poſſibility of breach upon this ground, we have agreed to take the advice of the Aſſociation of Miniſters, before we require the people to avoid Communion with any. Only we reſolve not to do this all on the ſame reaſons and principles: One may think it of flat neceſſity in a Regimentall way: Another may think it of neceſſity in a way of Union: Another may think it convenient to avoid miſcarriages and raſh cenſures in ſo weighty a caſe: Another may think it fit to be yielded to, for Peace with thoſe Brethren that judge it neceſſary, ſeeing it is unqueſtionably lawfull to take advice in caſes of ſuch weight. And why muſt we needs agree in our Reaſons, as long as we agree in our practice? 3. It is only a Preaching power that we exereiſe, applying Chriſts doctrine to particular perſons and caſes: ſuppoſing the evidence of the fact and guilt to be beyound queſtion, we do but apply the word to the perſon hereupon. The Word ſaith that with ſuch we muſt not eat, we muſt not bid them Good ſpeed, we muſt turn away from them, &c.] Now I have neighbours that go mad-drunk about the ſtreets ſometime once a week, ſometime once in three daies, ſometime but once a fortnight; Where hath God made it the prerogative of a Presbytery to name this man openly? or to ſay, With ſuch a man you muſt not eat?] Or if I have a neighbour that would openly perſwade others that Scripture is a fable and no Word of God; Why may not I ſay, [Bid him not good ſpeed.] Have not Paſtors a charge of particular ſouls, but only of people in general? Is not the Old Teſtament and New full of examples to warrant us in this? Take heed of crying down duty, under pretence of queſtioning Authority. If a ſingle Paſtor (that hath no

Presby-

be a Classicall Presbyterial, or Episcopal prerogative, then it will be as unlawfull for me to make so close an application, as to note out the person without naming him; for the case is all one. And then I may not answer a Separatist that will publiquely contradict my doctrine: or that will step up and Preach lies in my Congregation; because I cannot answer or reprehend him, without naming him, or personally applying my speeches to him. And then it seems a Minister may not out of the Pulpit name or describe any particular offendors openly, either in the Church or elsewhere: For the Pulpit makes not the difference (nor have we agreed there to do it.) What a deal of unscriptural invention is here? tending to the overthrow of all Ministerial power and duty. For if you will prove that one man may not name or particularize a sinner in reproof in publique, I will prove by the same reason that he may not as a Minister do it less publiquely before any witnesses; nor yet may perswade such particular persons to believe in Jesus Christ; which *Paul* durst do to a *Felix* or *Agrippa*.

Obj. But the offended Brother is bid [*Tell the Church*] and not Tell a particular Minister. And it is the Church that he is to hear. *Anſ.* And dare you say, he must not hear a particular Minister? Suppose it were granted you, that one Minister cannot be a Representative Church (as you interpret this Text) nor yet that it is the Congregation that is here meant; Doth it follow that because ultimatly the offended person must tell the Presbytery or Classis, that therefore he must not tell a single Pastor? or yet that a single Pastor must not without such telling, take notice of open abominations in the streets, nor personally reprove men? Thrust nothing on the Church without Scripture. It seems I may not go into the streets to reprove a railer, or part a fray, or reprehend the breakers of the Lords day, because it is a Classical or Episcopal prerogative to name men openly. Whether *Lot* offended in rebuking the *Sodomites*, will then be a hard question: For its like there was a greater Assembly then we have ordinarily at Worship: And if a Pastor may not do it, much less may any private man do it: and so farewell all brotherly open admonition, by any but a Classis or Bishop.

Obj. But, at least, one man may not sit in Judgement, nor examine

[illegible] May not be [illegible] such things be so [illegible] What is that Question which a Church or Pastor may not? 2. But for [illegible] we meddle not with it. 3. And where the case is doubtfull, we declare all Determinations or Censures: Those we leave as others prerogative, confessing it belongs not to us. I do not think that so high a penalty as exclusion from Church-Communion, must passe upon dark and doubtfull Evidences.

Let me add this much of my own private Opinion (wherein all my Brethren here agree not with me,) I confess I take it for a very clear truth, that one single Pastor may not only do what we have agreed in, but may properly Excommunicate, and may Govern a Church, where there is no other Governour of that Church with him: Nay more then that, I think he may and must do all that we agree in (in this point) though there were a Presbytery in that Church, and the *major* Vote were against him. I would willingly give you my reasons for these Assertions; but only for fear lest you should think by my reasoning for them, that these were any part of our Agreement, or that our Propositions had any necessary dependance on these.

I will say no more to any Objections that may possibly be made by my Brethren of the Classical way, because I finde by experience it is needless (if others be as those with us,) For they are the forwardest men to our Union and Association, of any others (here.) The Lord grant the like spirit of Unity and Condescension in other Parts.

As for the Objections that may be made by our Brethren of the Congregational way, I shall but touch them briefly.

1. Some may Object, that tying our selves to the observation of Parish bounds, and one Minister not to receive Members from anothers Congregations, doth hinder the free gathering of Churches, and may force a man to submit to a weak Minister, when he might have a better.

Ans. 1. Brethren! Would you have Unity and Peace or no? If you would, must not you condescend as far as may be to others, as well

of no Power with any [illegible] already come up to his will and way. [illegible] yield in [illegible] minded. 2. Did you ever [illegible] Members of a Church in one City, who lived contiguously in another City that had a Church? Shew me where? yea or did ever any were Members of one Church, that lived among the Members of another Church? Shew me that if you can. 3. Doth not Church Association and duty necessarily presuppose cohabitation? Is not natural capacity prerequisite to all duties or enjoyments? Can men in the Countrey that live in one Parish, do the offices and enjoy the benefits of Members many miles from them, beyond their capacity? 4. Is it not fit that bounds for order and division should be set? And may not the Magistrate do it? And is it not done in most places, as well as you can desire? And where it is not, but Parishes are either too great or too small, get them amended as soon as you can. In the mean time, affect not confusion: turn not all order upside down: God is not the God of confusion, but of order, which he would have established in all the Churches. 5. In the mean time, I pray you observe, that you may joyn with us in this without contradicting or deserting your own principles. For if there be fit persons enough in each Parish to compose a Church, and they be willing to keep to the ancient Bounds, will you not confess it lawful? Yea very fit? I know you will. If there be not enough in one Parish, we have agreed to lay two together; but by consent, and upon advice first had with the Association, and not too privately, lest it be rashly and unadvisedly. And can you disallow this? And if any particular persons living in one Parish would be Members of the Church in another, we have agreed to examine the case: 1. If that Parish that he lives in, have no Minister, or one as bad as none, or the person produce a just cause of his desire, we agree to admit him. 2. If the person have no sufficient cause, yet by consent of the Ministers of both Churches, we deny not but such a case may be dispensed with (as if a man say, I can profit more by a neighbour-Minister.) 3. But if he have no just cause, and they both consent not, we may well resolve to forbear and refuse him. For 1. Ministers are Free-men as well as the people, and therefore every mans desire must not deprive them of their freedom, and necessitate their yielding to it. 2. In such a case no violence is offered to the freedom of a Brother. 3. The publique welfare and

unity,

they would be Churches [illegible] your plead inconveniencies to them: Remember then it is no matter of Conscience, but of worldly commodity: And may not you for the generall good of the Churches against any mans commodity? 5. If all the people may lawfully joyn themselves with that Church which hath the Ablest Teacher, then almost all the world must go to a few men, and leave the rest. Then *Barnabas* may be forsaken, if *Paul* be the chief Speaker. 6. And then Able mens Churches will grow to that bigness, that they will be no Churches, the Matter being too big for the End and Form. I would know this of you, May not you agree on a way to keep your own Churches from swelling too big? no doubt: and must too: some then must be kept out. And may not you as honestly and orderly resolve to keep out Members of another Parish, that are fitter by habitation to be Members of another Church, then to keep out the fit Members of your own Parish, that live among you? 7. If you may (as you do) agree among your selves not to receive the Members of another Church that unwarrantably forsake their Pastor, without his consent; and this without any reference to Parish-bounds; why may you not better resolve on the same course with reference to Parish-bounds, where you have two reasons. The parties reasons for removall we suppose the same in both (as that he can better profit by another, *&c.*) 8. Yea if at present there be no reason to fear the over-greatness of some Churches, or if there were many discouragements in the Parishes they live in, yet consider that the time to come must be respected, as well as the present; and you should so contrive it rather, that other Churches may in season be bettered. 9. And God hath more means then Ministerial abilities to increase mens graces: He that keeps in Gods order under a meaner honest Minister, is like to be a more humble, thriving Christian, then he that will break that order under pretence of edification. The Lord knows that I speak against my own visible carnal interests in all this: For I am perswaded, if I would have gathered such a Church out of other Parishes, I could have had so many of the Professors for many miles compass as would have made an over-numerous Church.

But

pull out our eyes, that would have pulled out their own for us in a diſtempered ſcene. So Chriſtians ſhould not firſt ask [*Where may I have the beſt Miniſter, or moſt powerful Ordinances? or Where may I receive moſt good?*] but they muſt firſt ask [*Where lieth my Duty? and Where may I do moſt good?*] For Gods work muſt be done before our own. And the ſaving of ſouls and propagation of the Goſpel, muſt be preferred before our comforts. Yea let me tell you my obſervation; The Comfort that Chriſtians have in a ſuffering, ſelf-denying courſe of doing good, is a ſurer and more ſtable Comfort then that which is drawn from the ſpecial advantages of Ordinances. That man that lives among a company of poor ignorant ſouls, and will ſet himſelf night and day reſolvedly and unweariedly to teach them, perſwade them and win them to Chriſt, till he have bettered the imperfect Church where he is, ſhall uſually be a man of ſolid ſetled peace: When he that ſaith [*Theſe are Carnal, Heathens, Wicked; This is a weak Miniſtry; I will go joyn my ſelf to ſuch an excellent Miniſter and Church, and let them alone*] this man will likely be ſoon ſadded with his new comforts, and weary of his pretious Ordinances, and be as ready to vilifie them and turn to ſome other; till in this diſorder he have run himſelf out of breath, if not out of all appearance of Grace.

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2. *Obj.* But it may be objected, that by our propounding our Profeſſion to All our Pariſhes, either as being already Church-members, or at leaſt to be admitted, we ſhall take in all the unfit again, and make but a meer ſhew of Reformation; for they will all take and make this Profeſſion, and ſo be as they were before.

I confeſs I hear ſome make this Objection; but any conſiderate man of competent reaſon, may ſee how groundleſs it is. For 1. Though we offer Chriſt and Church-membership with him, to all, yet we do not admit all to be Church-members: For we admit not them that either refuſe Chriſt or refuſe to be Members on his terms. Nor do we admit all that will make this Profeſſion barely with the tongue: For we have agreed, for thoſe that underſtand not the Foundations, to Catechiſe them firſt: And thoſe that are notorious or proved ſcandalous ſinners, we ſhall firſt require their ſerious Pro-

 feſſion

[illegible] enough to [illegible] what can you require more? [illegible] Confent? Can any but a true Chriſtian [illegible] profeſſion ſincerely? I know you dare not affirm it. Will you [illegible] of your own head to ſhut out hypocrites, as if you had more care of the purity of the Church, then Chriſt had that purchaſed it with his blood? You'l ſay, Men may profeſs all this by rote as a form. I anſwer, 1. Bleſs God if Truth have ſo much friendſhip as to be profeſſed: I know many Profeſſors that were contemptuouſly unthankfull for this mercy, who have not ſo much left themſelves as a bare profeſſion of the Fundamentals, but are given up to the open denial of them, and to proteſt oppoſition to them. It would be taken for a mercy in *India*, yea in *Italy* or *Spain*, yea in *France*, if all could but be brought to an open Profeſſion of Gods pure Truth, though with moſt it were but formal.

2. But I would know how you will do to know mens hearts? Will you require an account of the manner of their converſion? Alas, you require them but to delude you, or themſelves, or to do an impoſſibility. May not any man of knowledge tell a fair tale of converſion that never had it? Is there not many a thouſand Chriſtians that never knew the time or manner of their converſion? And are there not many that do know much of the workings of Gods Spirit on their hearts, that have not words of their own to utter it? If you ſay, you would hear them give ſome teſtimony or ſignes, at leaſt as at preſent, of the work of Grace on them; I anſwer, What better ſignes can they give you then our Profeſſion doth contain? Sure I am, there is the true deſcription of a Chriſtian: I have lately ſeen a Book of the experiences of Church-members given in (its like not all at the firſt admittance, and its like made the beſt of) but yet I am ſure ſadly defective to an underſtanding eye (many of them.) Pretend not to more then your part in ſearching mens hearts. If you ſay, Theſe are but words put into their mouthes. I anſwer, 1. Prove that they come not from the heart if you can. 2. And are not the words of your Church-members learned before hand? Some body taught them; or they could not expreſs their mindes.

3. Doubtleſs our way is full as ſtrict as we can finde any Scripture to warrant us: (and we again deſire you if you will go further, to

prove

and tell us what you would have done, if you had been among your selves, but [ ] in examining Members, and admit men on bare words, you will not blame your own principles for that. I could never see but the Brethren of the Classical way do come up to as much ſtrictneſs for the qualification of Members, as your own principles do require, or as you can deſire them, ſo be it the execution be but anſwerable: And that will lie on the perſons that manage the work, and not ſo much on the principles.

4. I pray you obſerve how eaſie Chriſt is in Scripture in admitting men to him, and taking Members into his Church, the Acts of the Apoſtles throughout will tell you: How ſuddenly after converſion they were baptized, even thouſands. But with thoſe that are in his Church Chriſt is more ſtrict, and requireth that their lives be anſwerable to their Profeſſion. At firſt he admitteth them without any further triall, the ſame day that they profeſs Repentance and Faith: But afterwards he will caſt them out again, if they deny him by their works. If therefore you cannot blame us, in our Propoſitions for caſting out the ſcandalous; you have leſs reaſon to blame us for want of ſtrictneſs in the admiſſion. Remember alſo the freeneſs of Grace; and let not your Pulpit ſound with the name of free-Grace, when your practice contradicteth it, by ſhutting the door againſt thoſe that offer to come in on Chriſts own terms. If Chriſt queſtion you for this, it will be but a cold anſwer to ſay, Lord, we could not perceive that they ſpoke ſincerely.] For you muſt prove the contrary before you exclude him. All that ever I could hear to the contrary was but this much, All men muſt prove their claim to priviledges, and not put another to diſprove it. To which I ſay, Suppoſe that rule had no exceptions; They prove it thus [I am engaged to Chriſt by my Baptiſmal Covenant; I ſtand to that Covenant, believing what is mentioned in this Profeſſion, and conſenting to what is here mentioned; therefore I expect the Church-priviledges of a Chriſtian.] When he hath thus laid his claim, and ſhewed his Title, you muſt have ſomething to prove it inſufficient, or you muſt not dare to deny him his priviledge. If you can prove that there is no probability that he is ſincere in this Profeſſion, it muſt be either from his groſs ignorance of the meaning of the words which he uttereth, or elſe by his wicked life; in both which caſes we agree with you.

[illegible] as we our selves have [illegible] their Brethren [illegible] own; and how backward to uncover their nakedness, and to make the worst of their case, that have need of such gentle handling our selves. Remember Paul's command, Rom. 14.1. *Him that is Weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtfull Disputations.* See *Gal.*6.1,2,3. Remember how oft Christ was accused for being a friend or companion to publicans and sinners? and by whom he was so accused? and how oft he shewed lenity, and how seldom severity? and how dreadfully he judgeth rash Judgers? and how unmeet it is that the servant should be stricter in keeping out, then the Master is; and that man should pretend to be more righteous then God. Remember also that good Christians must have a great desire of the largeness as well as of the purity of Christs Church. Of thirty parts which the world may be divided into, nineteen are said to be Pagan-Idolaters, and six parts Mahometans, and but five parts Christians. And of these Christians, when you have counted, the Abassines, the Greeks, the Papists, of all which (with the other smaller parties, as the Coptes, the Jacobines, &c.) it is hard to say which are the more ignorant and defective; how few are the Reformed Churches! And doth it beseem you with this poor handfull to go so neer the quick, and to pare away more then Christ alloweth you? One seven years converse with Indians and Turks, would make some men more charitable to weaker common Protestants while they lived. Above all take heed (in the Name of Christ I warn you) that you be not cruel to Christs Lambs: that you shut not them out for want of meer words. Experience hath ascertained me, that there are Christians that are much with God, powerfull in secret grones and strivings, and do understand the substance of the Fundamentals and much more, nay that are very able to help the ignorant, and great promoters of Gods work in their places; who yet are not able to give a Minister or understanding friend any considerable account of their faith: Partly through bashfulness, but most through some secret natural unreadiness of speech, and disability to express their mindes. Take heed what you do with poor ignorant men and women that live well, and shew a fear of offending God. He that gently drives and carrieth his Lambs in his arms, will not thank you for shutting them out

or

[illegible] Remember ever among [illegible] Whether the fearfull Scandals, Hypocrisies and Apostacies of Professors in this age, when many dare not and fear God, that were accounted but common civil ignorant people, be not a warning and testimony from heaven against our over-valuing sober Gifts and Words, and our under-valuing poor weak Christians, that want them; and yet are as loth to sin as others.

As for the Objection about our denying Church-Government to the people, I answered it in the Explication of the Propositions: We give them the summe of what all moderate men desire, in giving them a Judgement of Discretion, and freedom from all humane inslaving of conscience. If any will needs have them be also Church-Governours by the *major* Vote, there is no possibility of Union with those that hold such sandy Principles, directly destructive to the very Being of true Political Churches and Government.

The Church not to be governed by the Multitude

The next Objectors that I have to deal with, are our Brethren of the Episcopal Way; whose dissent I am readier to expect then others; not so much from the distance of Principles, as from other accidental disadvantages which I foresee.

The Objections which our vulgar hearers of that Judgement do make, are partly occasioned from custom, partly from the suggestions of Learned men of that Way, who also confirm them in the former. And therefore I must here speak first to the people, and then to those Learned men that prevail with them.

Very many of the people that stick most resolutely to that party and those waies (of my acquaintance,) are such as we cannot admit to Communion with us, till they shall openly profess their Repentance of their drunkenness, swearing, scorning at Godliness, &c. which they are notoriously guilty of: These I will not stand to dispute with about Ceremonies, they having greater matters first to dispatch. But I am not so uncharitable or censorious as to imagine, that none are tender conscienc't, Pious and Judicious, that may yet need satisfaction in the following points. To such therefore I shall first speak.

The Objections which I have great reason to foresee will be here raised, are these three. 1. That we do in our Agreement in the tenth

differing parties. 2. That we are no true Churches, both because we are not Diocesan Churches, and because we have no Bishops, and because that many of us were Ordained without Bishops, and so are no true Ministers, and therefore it is unlawfull to acknowledge us as Pastors, or to joyn with our Churches as Members. 3. That they cannot in conscience joyn with us, unless they may before-hand be assured, that they may have the Sacrament kneeling, and the Liturgie used as formerly it hath been. I shall answer these three Objections in order.

To the first I answer: 1. They may as well say that Preaching and Pastoral oversight is proper to the Bishop (which some do not stick to do) for no Word of God or common reason restrains that Pastor from particular applications, who hath Authority for general ones. Is there greater Authority requisite for speaking to one man, then to a thousand? or for doing that which in some cases every private man may do (tell his Brother of his sin, and tell the Church of him if he reform not) then for the rest of the Ministerial work? If a private man may before others reprove him as a private man, may not I before others reprove him Authoritatively as a Minister? I would know whether it be all personal, open Applications that you forbid a Pastor? or only this one? If all, then you shew us indeed what the fruit of your kinde of Episcopacy would be: how it would overthrow the very Office and Work of the Ministry, and not allow a Minister to reprove or exhort a man, as his case requireth. If a man fall a swearing in the Church when I am Preaching, I may not as a Minister rebuke him? I have read of times when Bishops did arrogate Preaching as their sole prerogative (except sometimes when they saw good to permit a Presbyter to Preach extraordinarily:) but I never read of any that forbad them all open personall Applications. I suppose therefore that you will not affirm this. And if I may apply other truths to the consciences of my people, then why not this? Is it because of the nature of the thing? or from any limitation of my Power in Gods Word? Prove either if you can. May I not by way of exhortation say to a Drunkard [I intreat you in the Name of Christ to be sober, and forsake your sin?] Why may not I then say [Christ hath threatned damnation to you, except you repent] and [The Church

do [illegible] long not to [illegible] and [illegible] so to require it? Christ bid me Preach one Text of Scripture, and not another; May I require them to obey that command, *Heb.* 10.25. *Forsake not the Assembling of your selves together*] and reprove those that disobey it (personally) in not coming to the Assemblies, or seldom? And may I not on the same Authority require them to obey that command, 1 *Cor.* 5.11. *But now I have written to you not to keep company, If any man that is called a Brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, With such a one no not to eat.*] Or that in 2 *Joh.* 10,11. *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him, God speed. For he that biddeth him, God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.*] And that 2 *Thes.* 3.6,14,15. *Now We command you Brethren in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye Withdraw your selves from every Brother that Walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition Which he received of us. And if any man obey not our Word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company With him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a Brother.*] May not Ministers require their people in particular cases to obey these precepts?

2. Nay, *may* not, nay *must* not our people obey these precepts whether we require them or not? yea though we forbid them? Else God shall be no God, without the Bishops license. You cannot say therefore that we may not apply these precepts to particular persons and cases, for our people must apply them, or else they cannot obey them. Peruse them and judge so, *Rom.* 16. 17. with many the like.

3. Is it not the doctrine of the Bishops themselves that Presbyters may Rule, Guide, and Oversee the people; but that Bishops must Rule, and Oversee the Presbyters? So that this is the main difference that they make of the Offices in degrees, in point of Jurisdiction, that both are Overseers, but one of the people, the other of Pastors? Why then may not we be allowed the Guidance, Rule and Oversight of our people?

4. They that distinguish between the Key of order and the Key of Jurisdiction, do without question allow the former to the Presbyters. Now the Key of order (as rightly understood, as *Spalatensis* hath largely opened it) comprehendeth all that power whereby we do immedi-

[illegible] and
[illegible] to be an further effectual [illegible] they conſcientiouſly [illegible] to it,
voluntarily, without external force. It is but our Preaching and ap-
plying Gods Word to the conſciences of the hearers.

5. It ſeems they that make this Objection, would have Gods work undone, if there be not Biſhops to do it. Men muſt not be told openly of their ſin and danger and duty, nor the Church be told of their duty in avoiding the ſcandalous, except Biſhops do it. Wo then to all thoſe Nations and Churches that have no Biſhops, and wo to thoſe Churches where the Biſhop will not do it; and ſpecially where he will rather countenance the ſinner, and ſilence or baniſh the Preacher that would reform them. More ſhall be ſaid anon to this Objection.

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2. To the ſecond Objection (That we are no true Churches or Miniſters, *&c.*) I anſwer, 1. I muſt here neceſſarily give notice to all that ſhall reade theſe Papers, what kinde of men they be that I have to deal with in this.

There are in *England* two ſorts of Epiſcopal Divines. The one ſort are Proteſtants, differing in nothing conſiderable from the reſt of the Reformed Churches, ſave only in this matter of Church-Government. Theſe (if they be not ignorant, ungodly, negligent, inſufficient,) I ſhall heartily reverence and deſire their Union: And many of them the Church hath had, and yet hath, with whom I account my ſelf unworthy to be once named: Such as were *Jewell*, *Davenant*, and many more formerly; and ſuch as are A. B. *Uſher*, B. *Hall*, B. *Morton*, Dr *Sanderſon* and many more at this day. I am very confident that we have not in our Propoſitions agreed on any exerciſe of Diſcipline, which is not agreeable to the Principles of Proteſtant Biſhops to grant us; nay which Papiſts do not very many of them allow, where no Biſhops are. If therefore any of you that are our hearers, being not able to maintain your own conceits, or objections againſt us, will fly to the Authority of Epiſcopal Divines; we muſt intreat you to go to the Writings of Proteſtants only; and if you will enquire of any now living, let them be ſuch as our old godly Proteſtant Biſhops were: Or elſe I muſt tell you we neither expect

their

matters then Popery, being indeed *Caſſandrian* Papiſts, and levelling all their doctrines to the advancement of the Papall intereſt; If you will appeal to theſe Epiſcopal Divines, we ſhould almoſt as ſoon conſent to an appeal to *Rome*.

I muſt deſire you to underſtand thus much that you may know whom I mean. The *French* are more moderate Papiſts then the *Spaniards* and *Italians* are: Eſpecially as to the points of the Popes Infallibility, and his power over a General Council; and many of them deny moſt of his Power over the Churches and Biſhops of other Nations. Since the mixture of the *Engliſh* and *French* blood, there have been ſtrong endeavours afoot to make theſe two Nations of one Religion, and that muſt be the moderate *Caſſandrian* Popery. What agitations have been among our Superiours to that end, I will not once preſume to meddle with: But (to ſpeak of Scholars whom Scholars may be bolder with as being fitter Judges of their waies which their Writings do diſcover) one of the firſt and moſt famous Trumpets that ſounded a retreat to the Chriſtian world, to return (on theſe terms) to *Rome*, was *H. Grotius*, a man of great reading, much Learning, and a mighty Judgement to improve it; but being impriſoned in his Country for his actions for the Arminians in the great ſtirres that were then a foot, and having eſcaped (being carried out in a Trunk) was made the *Swediſh* Ambaſſador with the King of *France*. This exaſperated Learned man, by his reſidence in *France*, did both lie open the more to the reception of impreſſions from the Jeſuites, who were his great familiars, and alſo had the fairer opportunity among thoſe Papiſts of the more moderate ſort, to proſecute his deſignes, for the reconciling of both parties (Papiſts and Proteſtants) in a *Caſſandrian* Popery. To this work he ſet himſelf with all his might, publiſhing *Caſſander*'s Conſultations with his Notes; ſeeking to draw us up to the Council of *Trent* (but not to the opinions of their private Doctors.) Several Writings between him and *Rivett*, with paſſages in his Annotations do ſhew us what was his Religion. This deſign had many favourites, of the better ſort of the Papiſts, and the colder and more Ceremonial party of the Proteſtants. *Fran. a Sancti Clarâ, alias Davenport (provinciæ Angliæ FF. Minorum Exminiſter Provincialis, Olim apud Duacenſes Lector Theologiæ*

of *Trent*. (But to high are their Councils, for any Reformation.) I know not this design [illegible] in greater measure to discover, by many passages of those times. How far it prevailed with the Bishops and the Kings Chaplains, and other Doctors, I had rather leave to your selves to judge, then take from my word; only I would desire you but impartially to reade the Articles that were in the beginning of the Parliament (while L. *Digby*, L. *Faulkland* and such others joyned with them) preferred by the Commons of *England* against B. *Wren*, B. *Pierce*, B. *Goodman*, with the rest of them; And observe how they all seemed Protestants, as long as the Warre was like to prosper for them; but since that is hopeless, how easily Dr *Vane*, Dr *Baily*, Dr *Geffe*, with many more are turned Papists (of whom the *Legenda Lignea* will give you an account:) But some had more wit then these, and think they may do that Party more service by staying in *England*, under the names of Episcopal Divines, a great deal then they can do by declaring themselves Papists: And therefore they rather choose yet to make use of these greater Advantages: And I confess they have very many and very great: And I take my self bound to proclaim to the Inhabitants of this Nation, this publique warning (that they may escape the danger if yet it be possible;) and to tell them that he is stark blinde that doth not see so strong a design laid for the introduction of Popery, that gives it a strong probability of prevailing, if God do not wonderfully blast it. The first part of the Plot is, by blowing up the sparks of all Errours and Heresies, that our Churches being divided, may become odious, and so men may be prepared for a remove. (The kindling of dissentions and Warres between Protestants, let God and the Authors look after; I will not meddle with that.) The next is an incessant endeavour to infect all persons, especially those in Power, Civil or Military, with the opinion of Libertinism, that all their doctrines may have Toleration and free vent, and their practices a free exercise. They will not yet openly shew themselves till their expected freedom be established: but if once they were sure of it, so that their open dealing would be no hazard to their Toleration, you should have them as busily running into our Pulpits, or challenging the weaker Ministers to Dispute about the truth of our Church and Religion, as

any,

take him for their Minister, (for it is best cheap, and will most humour them. And then they know that one Jesuite will shame and silence a hundred such Ministers in disputation, and carry the Countrey before them in many places. And the fourth part of their Plot is, to hinder all Union of the Learned Godly Ministers, and all exercise of any Discipline, or maintaining of Church order: that so they may tell the world, we have no Church, no Government, &c. and that so by division we may be disabled from opposing them; and we may not obtain that strength among our selves, nor that interest in the people, which our Unity and Unanimity would afford us against them. And therefore I know they will malice our Union in this County. The fifth, and not the least part of the Plot is, to keep afoot a Party of Learned men, who under the name of Episcopal Divines, may keep an interest in the people, and partly draw them from Unity, and from obeying their Pastors, by pretending a necessity of Episcopacy and Ceremonies, and keeping open the breaches upon that occasion made; and partly may instill into them those principles which may prepare them for flat Popery. And I confess its a great advantage that they have for this Work. For 1. Some of them are men of so much Learning as may deserve much respect. 2. Some Ministers lately put in, are young, weak, and indiscreet, and fit matter for them to contemn, and modestly to make stepping stones to their own reputation. 3. The Gentry that did with them adhere to the late King, are under so much suffering in their Estate, Reputation, Places of Honour, &c. that no man can wonder if their mindes be much exasperated, and alienated from those Ministers that were not of their Party (especially when they have weak injudicious men to be their Ministers:) Nor should any wonder if they very much value and prefer those Learned Divines that were of their side: And so be ready to hear their Judgements before others. 4. And yet more must it needs endear them to the Gentry, in that they are their fellow-sufferers in the same cause: many of them being sequestred, and cast out of their places, for the matter of the Warres: And all men naturally pity the suffering, but especially their fellow-sufferers. I scarcely know the thing in the world that more uniteth and endeareth men, then suffering together in a cause

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So that, alas, it's a poor hard game that the other Sects in *England* are playing in comparison of the Papists. The Plot in a word is this. The multitude and madness of other Sects must be the means to drive them from their present station. The *Cassandrian* Papists under the name of Episcopal Divines, must be the instruments to draw them from their present station, and loosen them from their Ministers, and so to prepare them for the Church of *Rome*; and then when the matter is ripe, they must deliver them all up to the Mass-Priests; and when any publique Disputations are abroad, they must give the Papists the better, and pass into their Camp.

I do judge it my duty to desire all the people of *England*, especially the Gentry, to discern the danger that they are in, and beware: and to be jealous lest their discontents and passions should betray their souls: and so lest they do themselves more wrong then all their enemies ever did them. And do not think that I censure you too uncharitably, in thinking you in so much danger of Popery. For you are but men: and it is no easie matter to break through so many discontents, enticements, prejudices and other great temptations, which any man may see in your way: I see the nets are strong, and the fishes most of them weak, and therefore it is easie to propheſie what is like to become of you, if God do not speedily shew you the danger. Yea many of the more Learned Gentlemen of your own party, are lately awakened to see your danger; partly by the number of them that are already turned Papists, and partly by the industry of the Papists to pervert the rest: And they do themselves publish to the world, what a pack of notorious ignorant, silly souls, or wicked unclean persons, those are that are turned Papists; such as are no great credit to the Religion that they turn to. See the Authour of *Legenda Lignea*, Mr *Chiſenhall* against Dr *Vane*, Mr *Watherhouſe* for Learning: all zealous men for Episcopacy; And indeed this is a great part of the danger, that very many of the Gentry are to this day, after all the warnings of Gods Judgements, so sensual and licentious, so prophane and deboist, spending almost all their time in drinking, hawking, hunting, bowling, yea swearing and other ungodly practices (wasting that pretious time in vanity, which

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warn you of your danger, and profeſſe to you all, that the Gentry of *England* that were adherents to the King, are now under ſo great temptations, and ſo great danger of Popery, that if God be not very mercifull to them, they are gone. He that will deliver men from evil, will have them pray, *Lead us not into temptations*, you ſhall have them ere long inſinuating themſelves with you, if you be not fore-armed and reſolved.

And among all others your greateſt danger will be from the Popiſh Divines, that lurk under the name of Epiſcopal.

If you ask me how you ſhall know them to be ſuch. I anſwer, If they could be eaſily and certainly known, there were the leſs danger of them. But you may ſee much in this one thing: All their Writings or Diſcourſes do carry on the *Romane* Intereſt. You may finde in thoſe of them that write of Doctrinals or Devotion, 1. The plain footſteps of common Popery. I am loth to name men; but I could eaſily ſhew you a great deal of Popery in divers ſuch Books which I ſee much in Gentlemens hands, as written by an Epiſcopal Doctor. And thoſe of them that write about Church-Government, do quite forſake our Proteſtant Biſhops, and carry on thoſe principles, by which they may prove the Proteſtant Churches to be no Churches; nor our Miniſters any Miniſters; nor our people true Chriſtians: and which would neceſſitate us to go to *Rome* for our Orders; which we cannot have without being ſworn ſervants to the Pope.

Theſe are the men that I have now to deal with: for theirs are the Objections now to be anſwered.

They ſay we are no Miniſters, 1. Becauſe many were Ordained by meer Presbyters without Biſhops. 2. Others were but the Biſhops Curates, who were the ſole Paſtors of Churches. And ſo we have no Churches neither. For it can be no Politicall organized Church without Paſtors. And therefore our people ſhould not ſubmit to our Guidance, nor other Miniſters aſſociate with us as with Paſtors.

To this I now anſwer, 1. It is manifeſt that the contrivers of theſe Objections are not Proteſtants (in this at leaſt.) For 1. They do

no Ministers, [illegible] the Superintendents of Protestant Churches, and some parts of Germany, [illegible] [illegible] by the Magistrate, and (as I take it) having at first no Ordination by Bishops, no nor themselves pretending to that which in the judgement of our Antagonists, is the Office of a Bishop, it must needs follow that there are no true Ministers in any of the Protestant Churches, but what our own Dominions do afford.

2. Nay hereby they unchurch all those Churches at a blow. For if they are no Ministers, they can be no Organized Churches, no more then we.

3. Hereby they would absolve all the people of the Reformed Religion in *France, Holland, Helvetia, Scotland*, &c. from all obedience to their Pastors as such.

4. Yea, I think, hereby they would unchristen all the Reformed Christians in all these Nations. For they say (that's their great argument) no man can give that which he never had: but Presbyters never had power to Ordain: Therefore they cannot give it: and Bishops did not give it them. And will it not hold as strongly [Laymen never had power given them to Baptize; therefore they cannot give it to others, or exercise it themselves.] Now if the Ministers of the Reformed Churches be no Ministers, but Lay-men, then prove where any power to Baptize is given them. If these that I Dispute with will shew themselves openly to be Papists, and plead that women or Lay-men may Baptize in case of Necessity, I shall desire them to tell me, who gave them that power, and when, and by what expressions? and then we will compare a Presbyters power to Ordain, with a Lay-mans power to Baptize, and try with them, which hath the clearer Commission. In the mean time, it beseems not me to spend time on this Question, while the whole Army of the Learned Protestant Divines (Bishops and others) who have written against the Papists in this point, remain so much unanswered.

5. Yea hereby they would make the Praises, publique Worship, and Sacramental Administrations proper to the Ministry, to be all meer Nullities: and so God hath no Ministerial service in any of our Churches! O happy *Rome!* O miserable Reformed Churches, if all or any of this be true.

6. What

the doctrine of the Council of *Trent*, and casting all our charge to be true to them to the death, and this with a *Spondeo, Voveo ac Juro, sic me Deus adjuvet & hæc sancta Evangelia*: as the *Trent* Creed concludeth. Are not these think you zealous Protestants?

7. And if our Princes be of the minde as all Reforming Princes hitherto have been, to forbid all dependance on *Rome*, and seeking thither for Orders, as accounting it dangerous that their subjects should have so much dependance on forreign Powers, what shall we do for Ordination then?

8. It seems by these men, if these few Bishops were dead without successors, the Church of Christ, at least in *England*, were extinct. For if *Rome* be a true Church (which I deny not, without distinction) yet it is easie to prove that we may not lawfully take their Ordination on their terms: and then it seems the Church of *England* dependeth on these few men for its Being to the worlds end, in all likelihood. O what a rash thing it was to imprison *Wren* for Excommunicating, Suspending or Depriving, Censuring, Silencing, fifty Godly painfull Ministers in two years in *Norwich* Dioces, for not reading the Book for Dancing on the Lords daies, For using conceived Prayer before and after Sermon, For not reading the Service at the Altar, and such like: And for expelling three thousand persons with their families into other Lands, by such dealings, with many the like courses! How rashly did they accuse B. *Pierce* for such like practices, and putting down Ministers and Preaching, till he thanked God that he had not a Lecture in his Dioces, alledging that though there was need of Preaching in the Infancy of the Church, yet now there was no such need; suspending Ministers for Preaching on Market daies; and did so effectually put down all afternoon Sermons on the Lords daies, that he suspended him that Preached but a Funeral Sermon; and put the Minister to Penance that did but explain the Church Catechism, saying that was as bad as Preaching, and charging them that they ask no Questions, nor receive any Answers from the people, but such as were contained in the Catechism in the Service Book; and putting the Church-Wardens to Penance for not

Presenting

Wakes. (And all these they lay upon the Bishops, as being his Will.) But what should I tell a people of these things that have felt them: Had the Parliament known that it might lie in these mens hands, whether *England* shall ever (in likelihood) have Ministers more, or whether ever Christ shall have a Church in *England* more or not; Yea whether ever he shall have any Ministerial Worship, or one person Baptized into Christ; it might have seemed more wit to have let them crucifie the present Church, then extinguish our hopes for ever. Now when honest B. *Usher*, *Hall*, and one or two more are dead, the Parliament must go to the Tower to intreat these prisoners, that Christ may once more have a Church in *England*; but if they prove as dogged as they were wont to be, the Church is extinct, there is no probable remedy; our children cannot be Christened again for ever, because no man without a Bishop can Authorise a Minister to do it.

9. But suppose we could send to *Prester John*, and prevail with him for some Bishops (when the vast Kingdom of *Nubia* that was nearer him could not borrow some Preachers to save the life of gasping Christianity, but it was extinct for want of them;) Yet, alas, how is it possible that we in *England* could be sure that their Bishops were rightly Ordained, having their power from Generation to Generation by a succession of lawfully Ordained Bishops? Yea if we could get some but from *Russia* or *Constantinople*, our difficulty were insuperable. But I beleeve these Objectors would not have us to go so far, but rather stoop to *Romes* conditions.

10. But, have not Councils determined, That the Ordination shall be Null which a Bishop makes out of his own Dioceſs? *Concil. Antioch. Can.* 13. & 22. and then our cure is yet more difficult.

11. But what need I tell an *English* man that these Objectors are not sons of the Church of *England*, what ever they pretend, when the world knows that the Church of *England* took him to be a true Minister that was Ordained in *France*, *Holland*, *Scotland*, *Geneva*, *Heidelberge*, &c. by meer Presbyters without a Bishop? The world knows that we did not Ordain those again that were so Ordained; no more then we baptized those again that were there baptized. The

world

by Biſhops?

12. If yet the matter be not clear, let me intreat you to peruſe the Writings of the moſt zealous defenders of Epiſcopacy in the Church of *England*, and ſee whether they did not defend the truth of thoſe Churches and Miniſters callings that have no Biſhops; and the Paſtorall Offices there performed of Miniſters in Guiding their Flocks (though they think it were better if they had Biſhops.) I will not ſend you to *Chamier*, *Paræus*, *Sadeel*, or any of our forreign Divines, who in their Writings againſt *Bellarmine* and other Papiſts debate this Queſtion, becauſe they are known to be defenders of their own Churches. Nor will I mention *Whitakers*, *Reignolds*, or any the moſt Learned Doctors of our Univerſities, who are ſuſpected to be no great friends to Epiſcopacy: But thoſe that are paſt all ſuch ſuſpition I will cite; (yet not many, as not ſtanding with my neceſſary brevity, and being in a known caſe.)

1. Doctor *Field* the Learned Dean of *Gloceſter* in his 3. *li.* of the Church, & *c.*39. handleth this very point of purpoſe againſt the Papiſts, whom he brings in thus arguing [By this note it is eaſie to prove that the Reformed Churches are not the true Churches of God. It can be no Church that hath no Miniſter: and *Cypr.* ſaith, the Church is nothing elſe but *Plebs Epiſcopo adunata*. But among the Proteſtants there is no Miniſtry; Therefore no Church.] Dr *Field* anſwers [The *minor* we deny, *&c.*] Yea when they further Object, *p.*155. [Whatſoever may be ſaid of thoſe places where Biſhops did Ordain, yet in many other places none but Presbyters did impoſe hands, all which Ordinations are clearly void, and ſo by conſequent many of the pretended Reformed Churches, as *France*, &c. have no Miniſtry at all.] To this the Doctor anſwers at large: and diſtinguiſhing between 1. Election of the perſon. 2. Ordination in generall to the Miniſtry. 3. The aſſigning to a man that portion of Gods people, which he is to take care of, who *muſt be directed by him* in things that pertain to the hope of ſalvation,] he adds [This particular aſſignation giveth to them that had only the power of order before, the power of Juriſdiction alſo, over the perſons of men.] (So the Presbyters have power of Juriſdiction he thinks.) Next he addes, [*p.*157. Whereby it is moſt evident that that wherein a Biſhop excelleth

[illegible] Church: Hence it followeth that [illegible] in some cases Presbyters may lawfully do [illegible] Bishops, as *Hierom* noteth; *Ratione ad tempus dispensante propter ecclesiæ necessitatem*; rather for the honour of their Ministry, than the necessity of any law, and therefore we reade that Presbyters in some places, and at some times did impose hands, and confirm such as were baptized: which when *Gregory* Bishop of *Rome* would wholly have forbidden, there was so great exception taken to him for it, that he left it free again. And who knoweth not, that all Presbyters in cases of necessity may absolve and reconcile penitents; a thing in ordinary course appropriated unto Bishops: And why not by the same reason Ordain Presbyters and Deacons in cases of like necessity? for seeing the cause why they are forbidden to do those acts is, because to Bishops ordinarily the care of all Churches is committed, and to them in all reason the Ordination of such as must serve in the Church pertaineth, that have the chief care of the Church, and have Churches wherein to imploy them; which only Bishops have as long as they retain their standing; and not Presbyters, being but Assistants to Bishops in their Churches. If they become enemies to God and true Religion, in case of such necessity, as the care of Government of the Church is devolved to the Presbyters remaining Catholique, and being of a better spirit: so the duty of Ordaining such as are to assist or succeed them in the Work of the Ministry, pertains to them likewise. For if the power of Order, and Authority to intermeddle in things pertaining to Gods service, be the same in all Presbyters, and that they be limited in the execution of it, only for order sake, so that in case of necessity every of them may baptize and confirm them whom they have baptized, absolve and reconcile penitents, and do all those other acts, which regularly are appropriated unto the Bishop alone; there is no reason to be given, but that (in case of necessity, wherein all Bishops were extinguished by death, or being fallen into heresie, should refuse to Ordain any to serve God in his true Worship) Presbyters as they may do all other acts, whatsoever speciall challenge Bishops in ordinary course make unto them, might do this also.

Who then dare condemn all those worthy Ministers of God that were ordained by Presbyters in sundry Churches of the world at such

times

Armachanus a very learned and worthy Bishop, but as it appears by Alexander of Hales many learned men in his time and before, were of opinion that in some cases, and at some times, Presbyters may give Orders, and that their Ordinations are of force, though to do so, not being urged by extream necessity, cannot be excused from over-great boldness and presumption; neither should it seem so strange to our adversaries that the power of Ordination should at some times be yielded unto Presbyters, seeing their *Chorepiscopi*, *Suffragans* or titular Bishops that live in the Dioces and Churches of other Bishops, and are no Bishops according to the old course of Discipline, do daily in the Romish Church both Confirm children and give Orders.

All that may be alledged out of Fathers for proof of the contrary, may be reduced to two heads. For first, whereas they make all such Ordinations void as are made by Presbyters, it is to be understood according to the strictness of the Canons in use in their time, and not absolutely in the nature of the thing; which appears in that they likewise make all Ordinations *sine titulo* to be void: all Ordinations of Bishops, ordained by fewer then three Bishops with the Metropolitane: all Ordinations of Presbyters by Bishops out of their own Churches without special leave: Whereas I am well assured the Romanists will not pronounce any of these to be void, though the parties so doing are not excusable from all fault. Secondly, Their sayings are to be understood regularly not without exception of some special cases that may fall out.

Thus then we see the Objection, which our adversaries took to be unanswerable, is abundantly answered out of the grounds of their own Schoolmen, the opinion of many singularly learned amongst them, and their own daily practice, in that *Chorepiscopi* or *Suffragans*, as they call them, being not Bishops, but only Presbyters whatsoever they pretend, and forbidden by all old Canons to meddle in Ordination, yet do daily with good allowance of the *Roman* Church, Ordain Presbyters and Deacons, confirm (with imposition of hands) those that are baptized, and do all other Episcopal acts whiles their great Bishops Lord it like Princes in all temporal ease and worldly bravery.

[illegible] Churches that had lawfull Bishops at the time of those pretended Ordinations; and consequently, did not succeed but incroach upon other mens right. To this we answer, that the Church is left void, either by the death, resignation, deprivation, or the peoples desertion and forsaking him that did precede: in some places, our first Bishops and Pastors found Churches void by death, in some by voluntary relinquishment, in some by deprivation, and in some by desertion, in that the people, or at least that part of the people that adhered to the Catholique verity who have power to choose their Pastor, to admit the worthy and refuse the unworthy, did forsake the former that were Wolves and not Pastors, and submitted themselves to those of a better spirit. Of the three first kindes of voidance there can be no question; of this fourth there may: and therefore I will prove it by sufficient authority and strength of reason.

Cyprian, Cecilius, Polycarpus, and other Bishops writing to the Clergy, and people of the Churches in *Spain*, whereof *Basilides* and *Martialis* were Bishops, who fell in time of persecution, denied the Faith, and defiled themselves with idolatry, perswade them to separate themselves from those Bishops, assuring them that the people being holy, Religious, fearing God, and obeying his Laws, may and ought to separate themselves from impious and wicked Bishops, and not to communicate with them in the matters of Gods service, *Quando ipsa plebs maximè habeat potestatem, vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes vel indignos recusandi*; that is, seeing the people have authority to choose the worthy and refuse the unworthy. And *Occam* to the same purpose saith on this sort, *Si Papa & maximè celebres Episcopi incidant in hæresin, ad Catholicos devoluta est potestas omnis judicandi*; If the Pope and the principall Bishops of the Christian world do fall to Heresie, the power of all Ecclesiasticall judgement is devolved to the inferiour Clergy and people remaining Catholique.

L. 1. Ep. 4. Par. 1. l. 5. 28.

This opinion of *Cyprian* and the rest, if our adversaries shall dislike or except against, may easily be confirmed by demonstration of reason:

ther to conſent to their ſuppoſed, which they may not do, or to ſeparate themſelves, which is the thing our adverſaries except againſt in the people of our time. Now having ſeparated themſelves from their former ſuppoſed and pretended Paſtors, what remaineth, but that they make choiſe of new to be Ordained and ſet over them; if not by the concurrence of ſuch and ſo many, as the ſtrictneſs of the Canon doth ordinarily require to concurre in Ordinations, yet by ſuch as in caſes of neceſſity, by all rules of equity are warranted to perform the ſame.] Thus far Dr *Field*.

I finde tranſcribing will make theſe Papers more tedious then I intended, and therefore I will forbear moſt of the reſt, which elſe I would adjoyn.

2. The ſame Vindication of the Reformed Churches, and the Ordination of their Miniſters without Biſhops, you may finde in that Learned Godly man, B. *Downame*, and that in his very Writings for Biſhops, the ſtrongeſt for Epiſcopacy that ever I ſaw (not excepting the late ones) and very paſſionate againſt the oppoſers of Epiſcopacy. See his Conſecr. Serm. and Defence of it, *li.* 3. *c.* 4. *pag.* 108. In the laſt he writes thus: [Out of a Chriſtian and charitable deſire to preſerve the credit of ſuch Reformed Churches as have no Biſhops, I endeavoured to prevent the Objections of Papiſts, (mark who are the Objectors) who reaſon thus againſt them: The right of Ordination being peculiar to Biſhops, it followeth, that where is no Biſhop there is no Ordination: Where is no Ordination there are no Miniſters: Where are no Miniſters, there is no Church. I anſwered that although ordinary right of Ordination belongeth to Biſhops in the judgement of the ancient Church; that yet it was not to be underſtood, as ſo appropriating it to them, as that extraordinarily, and in caſe of neceſſity it might not be lawfull for Presbyters to Ordain; and much leſs teaching abſolutely a Nullity of the Ordination which is performed without a Biſhop, which Anſwer I confirmed by divers Reaſons (ſee them.) Whereunto I now adde, that there ſeemeth to be the like reaſons for the Impoſition of Hands, in Confirmation of the baptized, in the reconciliation of publique penitents, as in the

[illegible] *Augustin* [illegible] *Epist.* 137. [illegible] *Cyprian, l.3. Ep.17.* and divers Councils, *Conc. Carthag. 4. Can. 2 & 4. Conc. Aranſic. c.2.* And the Popiſh Writers themſelves do teach that the Pope may give licenſe to him that is not a Biſhop, to Ordain: ſo that he to whom ſuch licenſe is given, have thoſe orders himſelf, which he would give to another. *Summa Angelic. ordo* §.2. If therefore by the Popes licenſe a Presbyter may Ordain Presbyters, much better may a company of Presbyters, to whom in the *want of a Biſhop the charge of the Church is divolved,* be authorized thereto by Neceſſity, which as they ſay, hath no Law.] So far B. *Downame.*

3. B. *Jewell* in his Defence of the Apol. (authorized to be kept in all Churches) Part 2. *p.*131. [Neither doth the Church of *England* depend on them whom you ſo often call Apoſtates, as if our Church were no Church without them. They are no Apoſtates Mr *H. &c.* Notwithſtanding if there were not one, neither of them, nor of us, left alive, yet would not therefore the whole Church of *England* flee to *Lovaine. Tertullian* ſaith, *Nonne & Laici Sacerdotes ſumus? Scriptum eſt, Regnum quoque & Sacerdotes Deo & Patri ſuo nos fecit: Differentiam inter ordinem & plebem conſtituit Eccleſiæ Authoritas, & honos per ordinis conſeſſum ſanctificatus à Deo. Ubi Eccleſiaſtici ordinis non eſt conſeſſus, & offert, & tingit Sacerdos qui eſt ibi ſolus. Sed & ubi tres ſunt, Eccleſia eſt, licet Laici.*] See more of Biſhop *Jewels* minde, Part 3. *p.*346. & *p.*2. *c.*3. *Div.*5. *p.*109,110,111. & *c.*9. *Diviſ.* 1. and his Serm. on *Hag.*1. and againſt their doctrine of ſucceſſion, *p.*2. *c.*5. *Diviſ.*1. pag. *(mihi)* 127,128,129. So much for him.

4. Learned *Saravia, de diverſ. Miniſtr. gradib.* cap.2. pag.10,11.

5. Biſhop *Alley* in his poor mans Library, *Prælect.*6. & *Prælect.*3. *p.*95,96.

6. Biſhop *Pilkinton* in his Treat. of the burning of *Pauls* Church, and on *Hag. c.*1. *ver.*1,2,3. to 14. *c.*2. *v.*1. to 11. and on *Abdaas* or *Obadiah v.*7,8.

7. Biſhop *Bridges* for Supremacy, *pag.*359, to 364.

8. Biſhop *Bilſon* in his Difference between Chriſtian ſubjection and unchriſtian Rebellion, *pag.*540,541,542. Part 3. *& paſſim,* pag. 233,234.

9. *Alex.*

Reformed Churches [illegible] And having laid down divers Propoſitions in favour of Epiſcopacy, he addes theſe following in favour of Presbytery, as conſiſtent with the former. [*Pag.*354. *Rurſum pro Paſtorum aequalitate haec prioribus illis minime pugnantia aſſerimus.* 1. *Epiſcopalem eminentiam non eſſe divini praecepti. Probatur hoc ſatis quia non probatur contrarium*, &c. 2. *Non plane univerſaliter obſervatum, ut cuique civitati unus Epiſcopus praeeſſet: de temporibus id jam probatum arbitramur; poſtea quoque ſaepe plures in una urbe Epiſcopi imitatione Judaeorum, qui quot habebant Synagogas, totidem Archiſynagogos: Multa autem in una ſaepe urbe Synagogae* (mark that) *aut (ut Philo etiam appellat)* περσευχαι: *unde illud in ſatyra, In qua te quaero proſeucha*, &c. p.357. *Jam verò etiam Cathedrae Epiſcopales multis in urbibus ſaepe non menſes tantum aliquot, ſed & per annos etiam multos vacavere; quo omni tempore Eccleſiae, ut cum Hieronymo etiam loquar, communi Presbyterorum conſilio gubernabantur, aut ut Ignatium loquentem audivimus* οι πρεσβυτεροι επιμενειν τω πλησιον. *Et* pag.358. *Quanquam autem ex horum patrum ſententia, Presbyteris adimitur ordinandi Jus, quod ipſum multis in Synodis conſtitutum videri eſt; Quid tamen obſtat quo minus id ita interpretemur ut Presbyteri neminem potuerint ordinare contempto Epiſcopo? Una cum Epiſcopo concurriſſe aliquatenus Presbyteros ad ordinationem docere videtur Synod.* 4. *Carthag.* &c. *Illud interea non video quomodo refelli poſſit, ubi Epiſcopi non ſunt, etiam à Presbytero rectè fieri ordinationem: Cum hoc ipſum inter ſcholaſticos Altiſiodorenſis jam pridem conceſſerit. Nimirum ea quae ἐυλαξίας cauſa obſervantur, exceptiones ſuas habent. Quomodo in veteri Concilio Carthag. in cauſa neceſſitatis Presbyteris conceditur reconciliare panitentes: & alibi manus imponere baptizatis. Dein ut ſupra diximus, dubium an Epiſcopis, an Presbyteris meris, propriores ſint Praesbyteri, qui nec ſub ſe Praesbyteros, nec ſupra ſe Epiſcopum habent. Nam & de Timotheo ita argumentatur Ambroſius* [*Qui ante ſe alterum non habebat, Epiſcopus erat.*] *Nimirum (ut è Republica, ſumamus exemplum.) Multa licent ſenatui Regem non habenti, quae ſenatui ſub Rege conſtituto non licent: Quia ſenatus ſine Rege, quaſi eſt Rex.* 3. *Hoc aſſeramus: Non leves fuiſſe cauſas cur hoc ſaeculo nonnullis in locis Epiſcopatus certè ad tempus aliquod emitte-*

reintur.

& in odium venerat [illegible] mos eſt gerendus?
3. Cauſa addi poteſt, quod [illegible] magiſtri veritatis nomine, inviſæ non culpam tantum [illegible], ſed & ſuſpicionem omnem amoliri debuerant; quod cum ſublata Epiſcopali dignitate ſollicitè curaverint, ne ſic quidem tamen calumniam effugerunt: Quid non auditurі, ſi doctrinæ mutatio conjuncta fuiſſet cum majoris gradus adeptione? Adjiciam unam inſuper cauſam cur initio repurgationis non admodum neceſſarius fuerit Epiſcopatus. Excitarat Deus præſtantes viros, ſummo ingenio, ſumma eruditione, nec minore tam apud ſuos, quam apud vicinos authoritate pollentes, paucos quidem numero, ſed qui plurimis negotiis ſuſtinendis pares eſſent: horum ſumma apud omnes exiſtimatio, facilè ſupplevit quod ab Epiſcopatu deerat. Et (ſi cum Zanchio *verum volumus agnoſcere) reipſa nulli magis Epiſcopi fuere, quam illi ipſi quorum (quamvis hoc non agentium) authoritas ad oppugnandum uſque Epiſcopatum valuit,&c.] Et* p.367. [*Exercitium ergo clavium, & jus abſolvendi penitentes ex omnium patrum ſententia ſolis competunt Sacerdotibus, hoc eſt, Freſbyteris verbi & Sacramentorum depoſitariis.*] Yea in favour of Lay-Elders he aſſerteth (having argued them not to be of Divine Inſtitution, yet) 1. That they may be lawfully inſtituted by Soveraigns, or by the Church on their permiſſion. 2. That it may be proved by Scripture that this Inſtitution is not diſpleaſing to God. 3. That there are examples in pious Antiquity, either of this ſame way, or one very near it. 4. That it is no contemptible benefit, that by theſe Elders may be received. But theſe to exerciſe their Office with ſeveral cautions: 1. Not claiming Inſtitution by Divine precept. 2. Not uſurping any of the power of the Keyes, nor of Excommunication, further then Excommunication belongeth to the people (executively.) 3. That the men be not unmeet. 4. Exerciſing no externall Juriſdiction but by publique Law. 5. Standing as mutable. Thus far *Grotius*.

To all theſe let me adde two Epiſcopal Gentlemen, that you may ſee the difference between Epiſcopal Proteſtants and Epiſcopal ſecret Caſſandrian Papiſts.

The

der a Ford of [illegible] and [illegible] to center the world within the compass of his contagious den, darting poyſon upon whom he firſt eſpies: as experience tels us how he glancing upon the poor *Scot*, has given him ſuch a deadly wound that he will ſcarce ever recover it, &c.] Is not this Gentleman zealous enough againſt Presbytery? But yet he is no Papiſt: *Pag.* 129. he ſaith [It is not abſolutely neceſſary that Biſhops Ordain Biſhops. For what if all the Biſhops ſhould dye ſo near at one time, that none were left Ordained by them? Shall not the Presbytery make Biſhops? They have Right to the Keyes; which are called *Claves Eccleſiæ, non Epiſcoporum:* and they are the remaining Pillars of the Church, and certainly may Confer the Order of Biſhop on others: and that the rather becauſe the Councils forbid Biſhops of another Province to Ordain, in a Forreign Province. And though it may ſeem ſtrange to ſome that Miniſters which are ſubordinate ſhould Ordain Biſhops, and ſo conferre Superiour Orders; it is not (if rightly examined) contradictory to Reaſon: For in this firſt Ordination of Prieſts and Deacons, they are *infra Ordines majores*, which Orders are called Holy and Sacramentall, and are the higheſt Orders: Witneſs Pope *Urban Dec. Diſt.* 60. *ſum. ſac. Ro. Eccleſ.* 226. As for the Order of Biſhops it is no more then a Prieſt as to the Holy and Sacramentall Order only: More excellent in reſpect of the order of Government, *Which is rather of humane then Divine Right: For as it is Divine it is no more then what every Prieſt hath by the Sacramentall Order: but as it is humane it is tranſcendent in relation to Diſcipline:* and therefore the Presbytery may agree to Ordain one over them to Govern them in Eccleſiaſtical Rites, as the people may chooſe a Prince to Govern in Civil affairs. Hence it was that the Apoſtles ſent *John* to *Epheſus*, &c.] So far Mr *Chiſenhall*.

12. I will adde alſo the Lord *Digby*'s words in that notable Judicious Letter to Sr *K. Digby*, pag. 118. [He that would reduce the Church now to the form of Government in the moſt Primitive times, ſhould not take, in my opinion, the beſt nor wiſeſt courſe; I am ſure not the ſafeſt: For he would be found pecking towards the Presbytery

[illegible] to the world; and which [illegible] *lucida intervalla* ſhone forth ſo gloriouſly in the happier [illegible] as more Monarchicall condition of Epiſcopacy: of which way of Government I am ſo well perſwaded, that I think it pity, it was not made betimes an Article of the *Scotiſh* Catechiſm, that Biſhops are *Jure Divino*. But as it is a true Maxime in nature, *Corruptio optimi peſſima*, ſo it holds likewiſe in Government both Civil and Eccleſiaſticall, *&c.*] So far the Lord *Digby*: Whoſe words I recite not for his Judgement againſt the Antiquity of Epiſcopacy (for I now diſclaim diſputing on that point:) but *a majore*, if Presbytery be likeſt to the Primitive Government, then at leaſt thoſe may be now true Churches that are without Epiſcopacy, and thoſe true Miniſters that are Ordained without them, and true Ordinances that are adminiſtred by ſuch Presbyters.

Nor do I take the L. *Digby*'s Reaſon for mens varying of Primitive forms of Government to be of ſolidity or ſafety. Nor do I alledge any of theſe fore-mentioned Authours as being of their opinion in the whole, nor as if they were with me of the higheſt Authority. But to evince the full conſent of the Epiſcopall party of Proteſtants, calling themſelves The Church of *England*; to be downright for the Truth of Miniſtery and Ordinances where there is no Epiſcopacy, nor Ordination by any but meer Presbyters: And to ſhew you that *Rome* hath alway argued for the contrary, and uſed the ſame Objections, which I am now anſwering, and that I anſwer now but on the grounds of the Epiſcopal Proteſtants.

13. The Judgement of Learned Bp *Davenant* you may ſee in his *Determ. Qu.*42. *pag.*191,192. approving of the Ordination of Presbyters in caſe of Neceſſity, and in ſpeciall when Biſhops fall into hereſies, and refuſe to ordain Orthodox Paſtors, but will ordain only ſuch as will partake with them in their faction and errour; or when they turn combined Enemies to the truth: And hereupon he vindicates the Forreign Churches Ordinations without Biſhops.

14. Dr *Prideaux* our laſt Bp of *Worceſter* in *Faſcic. Cont. de diſcipl. Eccleſ. p.*249. ſaith, *Presbyterum Presbyteros ordinare poſſe; præſertim*

[illegible] & authoritate (as [illegible]) [illegible] And Dist. 8. *de veris Ministris*, [illegible] [those that were baptized of Hereticks themselves are truly baptized, and those that are ordained by them are truly ordained.]

15. Br *Andrews* also (as I remember, for I have not the Book now by me) in his Epistles to *Molinæus*, goes the same way.

16. See also how directly our Objectors imitate the Jesuite that disputeth against Dr *Potter*, *Chap.* 6. § 20. 21. 22. 23. And see *Chillingworths* full Answer to him, too long to transcribe; Some of his Questions are these, *pag.* 360. [Whether all those Protestants that conceive the distinction between Priests and Bishops, not to be of divine Institution, be schismaticall and hereticall for thinking so? Whether your form of ordaining Bishops and Priests be essential to a true Church? *&c.* Whether in saying that the true Church cannot subsist without undoubted true Bishops and Priests, you have not overthrown the truth of your own Church? Wherein I have proved it plainly Impossible, that any man should be so much as morally certain either of his own Priesthood, or any other mans? Lastly, Whether any one kinde of these external Forms and Orders and Government, be so necessary to the being of a Church, but that they may not be divers in divers places? and that a good and peaceable Christian may and ought to submit himself to the Government of the place where he lives, whatsoever he be? *&c.*]

Much more might be added out of many Authors to prove that the Doctrine of the old Episcopall Protestants is not contradicted by any thing in our Agreement, but by the Objectors is directly opposed.

But I know some will marvell that I bestow so many words in so plain a case, and trouble the Reader and my self with such frivolous Objections, which deserve not a serious Answer (for some have told me all this) But they must know that I have Reasons of weight for what I do. They are men of no contemptible Parts, though of Popish inclinations that manage these Objections, and make a great matter of them; and they are many of them well-meaning men, and of no contemptible Understandings, who through accidental advan-

Having [illegible] Bishops is against them. I will give you [illegible] of their designes; only adding here that saying of [illegible] (not as his, but because) cited by *Grotius, de Imperio summ. potest.* c. 10. pag. 322, 323. [*Pastorem Christianum de Vocatione sua solicitum esse non debere, neque ambigere quin Christiana ac legitima sit sua Vocatio ubi ad Evangelium prædicandum a pio Magistratu aut Principe vocatus est.*] Though I know this speech must be understood *cum grano salis*, some other requisites being here supposed as implied.

13. It may easily appear whether the Objectors be greater friends to *Rome*, then to our old Episcopall Divines, by the tendency of their present plot: For they would have all the people take us for no Ministers, and our Churches for no Churches, and so all Gods worship be neglected in publique where no Bishops or their Missionaries are. And so when all others are disseised and turned out, the Papists may freely enter, there being none but these few faithfull friends of their own to keep them out, which how well they will do you may by these conjecture.

14. The Objectors do openly back the Papists in the Argument of succession as a proper note of a true Church, against the stream of Protestants that have fully confuted them, both Bishops and others. It were in vain for me to fall on this dispute with these Doctors, as long as so many Volumes against *Bellarmine* are unanswered. *Dr Sutlive* saith, *In externa successione quam & hæretici sæpe habent & Orthodoxi* Non habent, *nihil est momenti, lib. de Eccles. cap.* 18. *fol.* 123. *pag.* 2. Reade more largely Bp *Jewell Defence of the Apol.* par. 2. pag. 131, 132. and in other places. But it were endlesse to cite all that joyn with us in this against the Popish necessity of succession: and it is needlesse as to those that have read the writings of our English Bishops and other Divines, who must needs know already how fully they speak to this point.

15. But it is a higher charge then Popery, that these Episcopall Doctors that I now speak of, are liable to: For my part, I see not how they can be excused from unchurching, if not unchristianing all the people of Christ on the whole earth; or at least leaving it utterly

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Bishop, because none Ordained but a Bishop; and no man is a Bishop that is not Ordained by a Bishop; and this must be a true Bishop, lawfully called, and not deprived again of his power; and this must be Ordained by a former Bishop, and he by a former, and so the succession must be followed to the Apostles. Now I would desire these seekers (for such they are) to resolve me these few doubts.

1. Can all the poor Christians in our Churches in faith submit to your own Ministry, or to any other mans on earth, as being true Ministers of Christ Authorized to Baptize, Administer the Supper, Guide the Church? *&c.* Can they know that the line of your succession hath been uninterrupted from the Apostles daies till now?

2. Nay, can your selves or any the learned'st Cardinals at *Rome*, or Bishops on earth know that your successions have not been interrupted? Is Church-History so clear, full and infallible in this? Suppose that by the advantage of the eminency of *Rome* (being the Imperial Seat, and so populous) that they could have such a Certainty of History, Hath every true Church or Bishop or Presbyter in the world so too? If so, I confess Historians have plaid their parts better, both for fulness and faithfulness, then ever I dreamed of.

3. Do you not deserve ill at the hands of all Gods Churches, and God himself, to bring all poor Christians to such an uncertainty as this, whether they have true Baptism, Ministry, Worship, *&c.* and to leave all Ministers at such a loss that no one man on earth (much less all) can act in Faith? How dare they adventure on a Calling which no man living can assure them that they are lawfully called to? and how should they comfortably go on in the works of it?

4. Must not all these following things concurre before you can know that you are a Minister on your own grounds? 1. You must be sure that he that Ordained you, was Ordained himself by a Bishop. 2. You must be sure that this Bishops own Ordination was such as was not void by the Canon: (that is, that it had not as great a defect as the Ordination of meer Presbyters which you say is Null.) And here what a loss are you at when some Councils allow that which another condemns: Some do make Null those Ordinations which others allow of. Particularly, you must be sure that he came not in by Simony (a hard matter:) that he was not a Heretick, or erroneous in the Fun-

Conſent (according to Canon and the Rubrick) are called to Conſent (according to Canon and the Rubrick) and that the people be preſent, and have liberty to make their exceptions, according to later times: with many the like. 3. You muſt be certain that all the Biſhops ſucceſſively from the Apoſtles times, by whom you draw your claim, were thus Ordained: For one Nullity breaks the whole chain, and nulleth all that follow, as you ſuppoſe. 4. You muſt be ſure that never a one of all theſe Biſhops did loſe his power again by Hereſie, wickedneſs or other means, before he Ordained the next. 5. You muſt be certain that the Biſhop had *intentionem Ordinandi* (if you be right Papiſts indeed.) 6. You muſt know who was the Apoſtle that was the root of your own ſucceſſion; which is a greater matter then to know what Apoſtle did firſt convert the Nation. And do you indeed know all theſe things? Is it indeed ſo certain whether it were *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, or *Simon Zelotes*, or any ſuch man, that firſt converted *England*? Nay do you know the *Names* of your Predeceſſors before the time of *Auguſtine* the Monk? And if you know not who the men were, much leſs do you know that they were every man of them truly Ordained. If you have curranter Hiſtory of theſe things then is yet openly known, why do you not produce it? When the very general Queſtion, Whether Biſhops were put in the places of the Flamins, and Archflamins, is ſo uncertainly determined by Hiſtory, that about thirty Hiſtorians affirm it, and yet Biſhop *Uſher*, *Jewell*, *Godwin*, Dr *Suttliffe*, Sr *H. Spelman*, deny it: I think waking men will hardly affirm a Certainty of any Hiſtory of their own ſucceſſion by an uninterrupted ſeries of truly Ordained lawfull Biſhops to the Apoſtle that Ordained the firſt Biſhop. Nay it's well known, that a great part of the Chriſtian world is Uncertain what particular Apoſtle did firſt convert their particular Countries: which yet were it known, would go but a little way toward the reſolving our doubt.

See B. *Uſhers Brit. Eccle. Prim.* c. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

But perhaps ſome will ſay, It is not neceſſary that I prove my ſucceſſion, let others diſprove it that queſtion it. I anſwer, 1. That Argument may ſerve to ſtop the mouth of ſome buſie Queſtioniſts; *In foro externo humano* it may have ſome force: But will that ſerve

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expect that you prove your Authority, and not only that others cannot disprove it. For it is Gods judgement and not mans, to which you must stand or fall. And therefore Conſcience muſt needs put you to reſolve this Queſtion, How know you that you are a true Miniſter? and ſo, How know you that your ſucceſſion hath been uninterrupted, from an Apoſtle, in point of lawfull Ordination? 3. But if you think it be enough to Conſcience, that you know nothing to the contrary; or that you *think* you have an uninterrupted ſucceſſion; then why may not this ſerve turn as well for others? Thoſe that think Biſhops to be a humane Inſtitution and unlawfull, do think themſelves more rightly Ordained then you; and therefore if *thinking* will ſerve turn, why may it not ſerve their turn? 4. And for our people, if it be enough to ſatisfie their Conſciences that Sacraments and other our Miniſterial Adminiſtrations are no Nullities, becauſe they think ſo, or becauſe they cannot diſprove our claim, then why muſt they not on that ground ſubmit to them that were Ordained without Biſhops, when they cannot diſprove their claim? 5. Nay why ſhould people trouble themſelves to know whether men be Ordained at all or no? When Thinking muſt and will ſerve turn, and a true diſcovery is impoſſible. For though you can ſhew your Orders, yet you cannot ſhew all the ſucceſſion of Orders from the Apoſtle to your Ordainer. I think that man that dare affirm that any one Paſtor on earth can know that he is a true Paſtor, (if a ſucceſſion of right Ordination uninterrupted be neceſſary to it and if want of that make the Ordination a Nullity,) is ſick of the diſeaſe that *Feſtus* ſuſpected in *Paul*, and is elevated ſo farre on the wings of Pride and Learning, that he is quite overgone Humility and Reaſon.

5. But yet this is not all. Do not theſe mens grounds leave it certain, that Chriſt hath no true Church or Miniſtry, or Ordinances, or Baptized Chriſtians in *England*, nay in all the Weſtern Churches, and perhaps not in the whole world? And then ſee whether theſe Popiſh Divines muſt not prove Seekers.

For the Greek Church it is well known how oft the ſucceſſion of their

Aegypti, Palestinæ, &c. Lucas &c. p. (mihi) 312. *Non [illegible] certam successionem: Nam* 1. *Patriarchæ Galliarum, Africæ, Aegypti & proinde* Antiochiæ, Hierosolymæ, & Alexandriæ *interruptam fuisse successionem: sola constat* Constantinopolitana *Ecclesia, &c. At* Constantinopolitana *Ecclesia non est Apostolica, nec ostendit certam originem ab Apostolis, &c.*] *Quod autem apud Græcos non sit Ecclesia, probamus alio modo; quia nimirum convicti sunt legitimè in tribus plenariis conciliis, Lateranensi, Lugdunensi, & Florentino de schismate at hæresi; ac præcipuè de hæresi circa processionem Spiritus Sancti à Filio, &c. Adde ultimò omnes Ecclesiæ illæ Patriarchales, habuerunt per longa tempora Episcopos manifestos hæreticos, & proinde interrupta est veterum Pastorum successio.*]

And of the adherents to the Pope in *Africa*, and *Asia* he saith, [*Non posse quidem ostendere successionem continuam Episcoporum suorum particularium, sed posse ostendere successionem continuam Episcoporum universalium, qui sunt Romani Episcopi, quibus illi subjectos se esse fatentur.*] So that you see in *Bellarmines* Judgement what case the rest of the world is in, except the Romanists. And yet the successive right Ordination is a matter of more apparent impossibility to be proved, then the suceſſion that *Bellarmine* speaks of.

Let us therefore come neerer home and see, Whether it be not Certain beyond all doubt, upon the grounds of *Bellarmine* and our Popish Doctors, that there is no true Church, Ministry or Ministerial administrations, in this Western part of the world? To begin at home, it is most certain, 1. That according to many ancient Canons (which are their Laws) our English Bishops of latest times were uncapable of ordaining; For they lost their Authority, by involving themselves in secular and publique administrations, *Canon Apost.* 80. For neglect of instructing their Flocks (most or many of them) *Can. Apost.* 51. and many more: For *non*-residence: For unjust silencing and suspending Ministers, and destroying the Preaching of the word, suppressing Learned able Teachers, and maintaining or permitting multitudes of silly souls that could but read and multitudes of drunken wicked livers. How many Canons do depose Bishops for these! Yet I know we had some very Learned, Pious, Reverend

Ordination, as long as it is undeniable that the English Bishops and Clergy did enslave themselves to the Pope, and profess their subjection to him, and to receive and hold their Authority from him. So that if the Pope had no Power to give Orders, then they were no Bishops (according to the Objectors rule.) Now that the Pope hath no Authority to Ordain, shall be made evident; by shewing that the succession of lawfull Bishops hath been interrupted at *Rome*, and so none since (on their own grounds) can be a true Bishop. 1. I will not undertake to maintain that the Pope is Antichrist, professing my weakness and ignorance of those Propheticall Scriptures, to be so great, that I dare not be confident in my interpretations of them: But yet our English Protestant Bishops have commonly been confident of it, and maintained it: and Bishop *Downames* Book *de Antichristo*, deserves consideration: and if that hold then the case is clear. 2. But however, that it is certain that multitudes of Popes have been such as were utterly uncapable of the Office of a Bishop, and power of making Bishops, is evident to any that hath read *Pauls* Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, and the old Canons and the Histories of the Popes lives. Pope *Liberius* subscribed to the Arians Confession in the Council of *Sirmium* [*Libenti animo suscepi in nullo contradicens*] and to that Councils condemnation of *Athanasius*. *Vid.* Binnium *Tom.* 1. *Conc. part.* 1. *p.*470,480,422. & Baron. *anno* 357. §. 9. & 344. §. 3,4,5. & Bellarm. *l.*4. *de Pontif. c.*9. Pope *Honorius* in two General Councils was condemned for a Heretick. *Vid.* Bin. *Conc.* 5. *Oecum.* Pope *Stephen* 6. and *Sergius* 1. did judge Pope *Formosus* uncapable of Ordaining, when they Decreed that those whom he Ordained, should be Ordained again. *Vid.* Sigebert. *Chron. p.*74. *anno* 902. Reade but what *Platina* saith of them in *Vit. Greg.*7. *Urban.*7. *Alexand.*3. *Alex.*6. *John* 13. *Joh.*22. & 23. Some were Sorcerers, some Idolaters, some jested at Christianity it self; some Arians, Nestorians, Monothelites, Montanists, denied the souls immortality: besides their infamous Whoredoms, Tyranny, Murders, Poysoning their Predecessors, Buying the Popedom, *&c.* But I had rather give you this in other

ambition and claim of Supremacie corrupted the holy Council of *Nice*: That Pope *Liberius* was an Arian heretick: That Pope *Leo*, as appeareth by the *Legend*, was alſo an Arian: That Pope *Celeſtine* was a Neſtorian heretick: Pope *Honorius* a Monotheſite heretick: Pope *John* 22. was reproved by *Gerſon* and the School of *Paris* for an heretick, *&c.* And to leave Dame *Joane*, &c. This is Mr *H.*'s holy ſucceſſion! Though faith fail, yet ſucceſſion muſt hold: For unto ſuch ſucceſſion God hath bound the holy Ghoſt. For lack of this ſucceſſion, for that in our Sees in the Churches of *England* we finde not ſo many Idolaters, Necromancers, Hereticks, Advouterers, Church-robbers, Perjured perſons, Mankillers, Renegates, Monſters, Scribes and Phariſees, as we may eaſily finde in the Church of *Rome*, therefore I trow Mr *H.* ſaith, we have no ſucceſſion, no Biſhops, we have no Church at all. But St *Paul* ſaith [*Faith cometh* (not by ſucceſſion, but) *by hearing*, and hearing cometh (not of Legacy or Inheritance from Biſhop to Biſhop, but) of the Word of God.] So far *Jewell*.

That truly Noble Lord *Du Pleſſis* ſaith, in Treat. of the Ch. *c.* 11. *p.* 362. &c. [Examining the Election of the Biſhops of the Romiſh Church, a man ſhall hardly finde one that may be called a Biſhop that can hold proof againſt the Canons Apoſtolicall or Eccleſiaſticall, either in that which concerneth lawfull Calling or the due exerciſe of it: Not of Calling; for where is the Election, or the Examination of life and of maners? Where is not (contrariwiſe) either only favour, or meer Simony? and yet the Canons are plain [That ſuch Inſtitutions of Biſhops are void of themſelves, and all thoſe likewiſe void that they beſtow upon others.] And, I pray you, when Pope *Eugenius* 4. is depoſed by the Oecumenicall Council of *Baſill*, and pronounced a Heretick and Schiſmatick, and all his adherents likewiſe, and yet retaineth the Papall Authority againſt the Judgement of that Council, where are the Cardinals and Biſhops communicating with one excommunicated, inſtituted by one deſtituted, receiving

that *Quod tantus existimatur ejus gregis numerus in convalescere, &c.* (see further.) So far *Du Plessis*.

Nay were there nothing against the Bishops of *Rome* but their claiming the Title of Universall Bishops, their own Pope *Gregory* will pronounce (*Epist.* 80.) that it is no other thing then to fall from the Faith: and (*Epist.*188.) it is Apostacy: and (*Ep.* 78.) it portendeth Antichrist: (yea surpasseth his pride, *Ep.*80.)

Reade Dr *Prideaux* Lect. 11. *de Antichristo*, & 9. And *Sutlive* fully.

And whether the Reign of Pope *Joane* be of no truth, or force to interrupt the succession, let it rest on the credit of that great number of Historians that report it.

If any man will say, that the Ordination of such as these forementioned Popes, is of more validity then of an Assembly of the most Learned Godly Presbyters, I think them not worthy any further confutation: Yet I desire them to regard these following words of Learned Dr *Hammond* in his Defence of the Lord *Falkland*, pag.64. [I ask you whether it be not true what his Lordship saith, that a Pope chosen by Simony, is *ipso facto* no Pope? You (durst not I conceive, because you) did not before deny it: and if now you will take more courage, let your minde be known, and we shall not doubt to bring as Classick Authors as your selves against you. If it be true, then is your answer of no validity, because of no truth: For either that infallibility, or what ever other power, must be annexed to him as a man (which he may be indeed though he be not Pope) or under some other relation, which infallibly belongs to him (neither of which I conceive you will affirm, for then ten thousand to one, some other will communicate with him in that claim) or else he must be Pope, when he is *ipso facto* no Pope; or else that power must be annext to him by some body that may think him Pope, when he is not, and then either God must run the Errour, or that power be given him from some others. For that God should know him to be no Pope, and yet give that power of Infallibility to him (for if you

[illegible] and
you need no more in [illegible] see further Dr *Hammond* pag. 66, 67.

So that it is too evident, not only that there is no certainty to be had in the *Roman* Church (and consequently in any that received their power from them) that there is any one true Bishop, Pastor or Ministeriall Administration, if succession of lawfull Ordination be necessary to the Being of these, but also it is certain that there is no Bishop or Ministry, and so no Church and Ordinances; which is a Conclusion so notoriously false and abominable, that we may know what to judge of the premises whence it is inferred.

By this time therefore I hope it is apparent that our Ministers Calling is not therefore Null, because they are Ordained by meer Presbyters. And that they that would by such accusations entice people from their Pastors to *Rome*, if they follow on the work according to their Principles, must bring them at last to be of no Church. Adde to this what I have said in the Preface to the second Part of my Book of *Rest*, and you will see that at long running the Principles of Popery do leade to flat Infidelity.

Bellarmine confesseth (*l.3. de Eccles.* c.10.) that [*Non habemus certitudinem nisi Moralem, quod isti sint Veri Episcopi.*] (He was loth to speak out and say the plain truth, that we can have no proper Morall Certainty at all, no nor probability.) But what then must salve this sore? why we may know that [*Aliqui saltem sunt Veri: alioqui Deus Ecclesiam deseruisset.*] True: but therefore it follows that a succession of right Ordination (as you maintain) is not necessary to such a knowledge. And then how shall it be known by the Lords Flock which be these true Pastors? Why he tels us [*Certi sumus certitudine infallibili, quod isti quos videmus sint Veri Episcopi & Pastores nostri: Nam ad hoc non requiritur, nec fides, nec character Ordinis, nec legitima electio, sed solum ut habeantur pro talibus ab Ecclesia.*] I pray you mark that all this is but *quod Christi locum tenent, & quod debemus illis Obedientiam:* But for this second [*Quod habeant potestatem Ordinis & Jurisdictionis*] poor *Bellarmine* leaves the Christian world

Conſcience, [illegible] Bellarmine ſay, Conſcience hath no proper Soveraignty or Legiſlative power, and therefore may *ligare*, but not *obligare*, we being *eo ipſo momento* bound both to judge more truly, and lay by that errour, and alſo to practice the contrary. 3. Obſerve, I pray you, that the upſhot of all is, that this is the whole thats requiſite [*Solum ut habeantur pro talibus ab Eccleſiâ*] and ſo I hope if the Church judge men Ordained without Biſhops to be true Paſtors, you have *Bellarmines* teſtimony that they owe them obedience, as to men that ſtand in Chriſts place. But I have been too long about this Section.

16. In the time of the Arian prevalency, when, as the Papiſts confeſs ſcarce five Biſhops could be found that were not turned Arians, was there not then an interruption of ſucceſſion in point of right Ordinations? and was all Null both then and ſince?

17. I have known in the Biſhops daies more then one or two idle ignorant Readers, that feigned their Orders, and made the people believe that they were Ordained by the Biſhop, and continued many a year in Adminiſtration of both Sacraments; and yet when it was diſcovered, it was not taken for Null which they had all this while done. Why then ſhould Presbyters Ordination be Null?

18. It was not neceſſary to the Prieſthood before Chriſt, that there were an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of right Ordination: For the Prieſts in Chriſts time were ſuch as had no right to it; not of the right line (which had been long before interrupted:) they bought the Prieſthood for Money: and as many judge, were annual and two at a time (though not equal:) Yet Chriſt requireth ſubmiſſion to them as Prieſts. I am ſorry that we muſt be put to uſe the ſame Arguments with theſe men, as we have done againſt the old Separatiſts ſo long.

But ſome will Object, That all this doth only prove, that in caſe of Neceſſity Presbyters may Ordain, and their Ordination is not Null: But thoſe cannot plead ſuch Neceſſity that have diſobediently put down Biſhops themſelves.

any fell, who yet [illegible] to any Brother that is offended; and I believe that they ought to rebuke me personally and hear my answer, before they withdraw from me, or censure me; much more so many others for my sake.

4. I do not know of any that can be charged higher (as against Episcopacy) then for taking it down so far as the Covenant takes it down. But the Covenant doth not take down all Episcopacy; but only the concatenation of Archbishops, Bishops, Chancellours, &c. which were then in *England*. To prove this 1. The words suffice, which can be no further extended then to the kinde of Episcopacy. 2. See Mr *Coleman's* Explication of it to the Lords house, upon which they took it, as in that sense.

Besides, we have not in this County (any where that I know of) once offered the Covenant to any of our people (except those that were in the Garrisons or Armies:) See further Mr *Prins* Speech in Parliament for an Agreement on the late Kings last terms.

5. The late Bishops, even in the judgement of all moderate men of their own party that ever I spoke with, did very many of them deserve to be put down, and more. Reade the Articles against *Wren, Pierce, Goodman, Laud*, &c.

6. We do in the very first Article of our Agreement, disclaim a present engaging our selves for any party, as such: or against any: and therefore we cannot in any Justice be disclaimed as a party that are confederate against Episcopacy: When we only desire a unanimous agreement in practice, so far as we are already agreed in Judgment, that our discord or strangeness may neither hinder our further edification, nor yet deprive the Church of Gods Ordinances, or of the beauty, strength, and other benefits of Union.

But perhaps it will be said, that We have no such Necessity, either of Ordination without Bishops, or of private agreements to Govern our Churches without them: For either we have Bishops, or may have when we will.

To

obedience as Gods Word commands us.

3. We know but very few Dioceſan Biſhops living in the Land; whereof one is a Biſhop of another Land, two or three at a very great diſtance, none of them Biſhops of this Dioceſs: ſome (I think) in the Tower, where we cannot come at them, and by their impeachments, ſuppoſe them uncapable of Ordaining: Therefore we are uncapable of making uſe of theſe.

4. We are all Ordained already, and we cannot be new-Ordained again, without 1. Incurring the ſentence of deprivation, according to the *Can. Apoſt.* 67. which requires that he be Depoſed who ſeeketh another Ordination, being already Ordained. 2. Or without un-Churching all or moſt of Chriſts Churches, and Degrading his Miniſters, by taking our Ordination for Null, as hath been ſhewed. And we do not go about our ſelves by this Agreement to meddle with Ordination.

5. This Objection ſuppoſeth, either that we are convinced that Dioceſan Epiſcopacy, is the only lawfull Government of the Church, or elſe that we may be convinced of it when we will; or elſe that Dioceſan Epiſcopacy is ſuch a Fundamentall, that he that beleeveth it not to be Gods only way of Church-Government, (though he be never ſo willing and diligent to know the truth, yet) muſt be avoided, and ſeparated from. But the two former ſuppoſitions we know to be falſe, and the third no Proteſtant takes for a Truth. For 1. Proteſtants have taken the Creed, Lords Prayer and ten Commandments, for a ſufficient teſt of Chriſtian Doctrine, ſo far as to diſcern who are Chriſtians and to be communicated with; at leaſt taking them with that Explication which an ordinary Believer may eaſily and certainly finde out, in the reſt of the Scriptures. They take thoſe to be no Fundamentals, which ſo many hundreds of men, yea the moſt Learned and Godly on earth, cannot yet agree in, or finde out the ſenſe of. 2. Proteſtants do not believe that all the Proteſtant Churches except *England* and *Ireland* (no nor any one for want of

Epiſco-

judgements.

I Anſwer: 1. Shew me but where thoſe men are, in ſo full a number as may ſupply the Churches neceſſities, but ſo farre, as that I and ſuch as I may conſcionably ſurceaſe, without the Churches loſs, and I here promiſe that I will joyfully give up my Office, when ever any ſuch fitter man ſhall be called to my place. And I think the reſt of my Brethren will do the like. But we live in the open world, where we have opportunity to know men, as well as others: and we cannot ſee any ſuch plentifull choice of Able, Pious men to ſupply all our Places if we ſhould give them up. And either the late Biſhops knew of none ſuch; or elſe they took the drunken Readers (that could ſcarce yet have a *Legit* to ſave their necks, if they needed it) to be fitter men then we to edifie the Flocks.

2. It ſeems theſe Objectors are of the ſame minde as the late Prelates, and would deprive and ſilence us all that are not convinced of the Rightfulneſs of Epiſcopacy, if it were in their power. For if they think that we may not be Aſſociated or Communicated with as Miniſters, unleſs we will ſet up Epiſcopacy; it ſeems they would authoritatively remove us, if they could, though we yet do nothing againſt them.

3. Methinks, modeſt humble men, conſcious of the frailty and fallibility of their own underſtandings, ſhould not be ſo confident in a Point ſo difficult; or at leaſt ſhould not be ſo unmercifully cenſorious to their Brethren, as to caſt off all that cannot ſee into a caſe ſo difficult ſo far as they, (ſuppoſe they ſee themſelves.) If they think it is of no great difficulty then they are yet more unchriſtianly cenſorious, to think that ſo many Learned, Judicious, Godly Divines as ſince the Reformation have been againſt Epiſcopacy in *France*, *Holland*, *Helvetia*, *Germany*, *Scotland*, yea in *England*, ſhould all be ſo wicked, as to ſhut their eyes againſt ſo eaſie a Truth, this is a hard judgement for humble men to paſs. We muſt intreat them to ſuppoſe that as we have read many of their Writings for Epiſcopacy, ſo we

have

ſhops, Part 2. Ch. 3. and unbishoping of *Timothy* and *Titus*.) Dr. *Reignolds*, and others, do give us as long a train of Arguments and Authorities on the other ſide. For our parts, we are ſome of one minde (it's likely) in this, and ſome of another; and it is utterly againſt my purpoſe to ſpeak on either ſide; but, methinks all thoſe men that have without prejudice read the Authors that I have mentioned (eſpecially *Bucerus*, *Parker*, and *Blondellus*, and *Salmaſius*,) yea though they have read all that ever was writ on the other ſide, ſhould be ſo apprehenſive of a difficulty in the buſineſs, as to be moderate and modeſt in the cenſure of their Brethren, and not to degrade or excommunicate all that differ from them.

But ſome will Object, If there be as great a Neceſſity of Preaching the Word, as you mention, yet while Biſhops are abſent, or you cannot have them for Ordination and Juriſdiction, you ſhould only Preach or inſtruct people in charity, as private men, but not undertake the work of the Miniſtry, what neceſſity ſoever there be.

I Anſwer: 1. The Church of Chriſt is little beholden to ſuch Objectors, that would rather the Church ſhould never have Miniſters or Miniſterial adminiſtrations, then have them without Biſhops. 2. Do you think that private men may publiquely Preach the Word, and that conſtantly, according to the Churches neceſſities? why then may they not as well adminiſter Sacraments. The Apoſtles had as ſpecial a Commiſſion to Preach as to adminiſter Sacraments. 3. Then if it be proved that ſucceſſion of right Ordination is interrupted, ſo that no man can be found that hath had ſuch a ſucceſſion from an Apoſtle, and ſo is authorized to Ordain; it ſeems you would have Chriſt have no Miniſters nor governed Church on earth any more, till he ſend new Apoſtles. Or if the Preachers in *New-England* could convert all the *Indians* to the faith, and could not have a Biſhop to Ordain them Miniſters, you would have theſe Converts be without Miniſters, Sacraments, Government, and Miniſteriall Churches to the worlds end. 4. We were many of us Ordained long before the

ed duty of Presbyters [illegible] but Presbyters may and must Rule their Congregations, by all the acts of Christs Discipline; even Excommunication and Absolution. 1. *Hierome* excepted only Ordination, as the Bishops prerogative (what time soever he spoke of.) 2. Ministers are called Rectors and Pastors of their Congregations, by Law, and by Divines. 3. In their Ordination the Bishops said to them [Receive the holy Ghost, whose sins ye do Remit they are Remitted, whose sins ye do Retain, they are Retained.] 4. Almost all Episcopal Divines that I know of, do fully confess it. So Bishop *Downame* Defence of Consecrat. Serm. *l.*3. *c.*4. *p.*105. gives Deacons a power of Preaching and Baptizing, and Presbyters moreover of administring the Lords Supper, and remitting and retaining mens sins Yea Bishop *Usher* in his Answer to the Jesuites Chall. *pag.* 133. saith [In the daies not only of *Cyprian*, but *Alcuinus* also (who lived 800 years after Christ) the Reconciliation of Penitents was not held to be such a proper Office of the Priest, but that a Deacon in his absence was allowed to perform the same. The ordinary course that was held herein, according to the form of the Ancient Canons, is thus laid down by the Fathers of the third Council of *Toledo*: That the Priest should first suspend him that repented of his fault from the Communion, and make him to have often recourse unto Imposition of hands among the rest of the Penitents; then when he had fulfilled the time of his satisfaction, as the consideration of the Priest did approve of it, he should restore him to the Communion.) So *Usher*. It were easie to shew the concurrent Judgements of Episcopal Protestants for Presbyters Governing their Flocks; so be it, 1. That they contradict not the Bishop. 2. And that they allow the Bishop to Govern the Presbyters. But it would be tedious and needless. 5. Almost all Episcopal Divines that I know of (except one or two new ones of these times) do expound all these following Texts of Scripture, as spoken of Presbyters, *Acts* 20.28. *Heb.* 13. 7,17,24. 1 *Thes.*5. 12,13. *Tit.* 1. 5,6,7. 1 *Tim.*3. 2,3,4. 1 *Pet.*5.2,3,4. And so do the Fathers expound them (though I say not all of them, *tantum de Presbyteris.*) See *Prins* Catalogue

*p.*1,2,3.

...and not Coerce by Censures. And if a Presbyter may not Govern directively, then he may not Teach, and then he hath nothing to do. *Bellarm.* distinguisheth of interior Jurisdiction *ad populum Christianum regendum in foro interiori Conscientiæ*: and exterior Jurisdiction *ad eundem populum regendum in foro exteriori*: and he cites *Abulensis Defens.* Part 2. *c.* 63. saying that the former power of Jurisdiction is conferred by God immediatly on every Priest in their Ordination: (*Bellarm. de Pontif.* l. 4. c. 22.) *Spalatensis* hath largely shewed that the proper Ministerial Jurisdiction is exercised on Conscience: and *lib.* 5. *de Rep. Eccl.* c. 12. he shews that the Presbyter without the Bishop may so binde and loose, and keep from the Sacrament or admit to it: which he oft shews elsewhere, as to that interior power which is only on Conscience. Yea Cardinal *Cusanus, de Concord. Cathol.* l. 2. c. 13. saith plainly, *Omnes Episcopi & forte etiam Presbyteri, æqualis sunt potestatis quoad Jurisdictionem; licet non executionis: quod quidem exercitium executivum, sub certis positivis clauditur & restringitur,* &c. *unde cessante causa statuti illius, tunc cessant illa jura positiva.* Though for my part, I think the term Jurisdiction is a great deal too big to be properly appliable to any Ecclesiastical, Ministerial Government. *Grotius* saith well, *de Imperio sum. pot.* c. 8. p. 209, 210. *Quod autem quærunt nonnulli, habeatne Ecclesia Legislativam potestatem, id ex his quæ superiùs à nobis explicata sunt facile dissolvitur. Nam lege divina non habet;* Τὸ νομοθετεῖν ἀνεῖται τῆς βασιλείας, *& sacerdotum non est νόμῳ κρατεῖν, ut ante citavimus: quare quæ ante Imperatores Christianos in Synodis conscripta sunt, ad Ordinem aut Ornatum facientia, Leges non vocantur, sed Canones, habentque aut solam Consilii vim, ut in his quæ singulos magis spectant quam universos, aut obligant per modum pacti volentes, & nolentes etiam pauciores ex necessitate determinationis, ac proinde ex lege naturali, non ex humano aliquo Imperio.*] Yea a further power there is to give such Directions which Gods Law obligeth men to obey: but this is scarce properly called Jurisdiction. 7. As for those that say the Bishops are the sole Pastors, and the power of Presbyters is but delegate from them, and therefore they may do nothing without them, all Scripture that describe the Office of Presbyters

might as judgement call all on the Bishop, and so find fault with the Bishops, that must answer for all. And else what man could then be a Diocesan Bishop when he must take the Charge of many thousand souls, that must wholly be committed to others instruction, and he himself shall never see their faces, nor hear their names. See this conceit of the Objectors fully confuted by *Spalatensis* (no rigid Protestant) *de Republ. Eccles.* l. 2. c. 9. 8. Papists themselves confess that when there is no Bishop the Government lieth on the Presbyters. 9. Who knows not (the Bishops confessing it) that in *Cyprians* time, and according to several Canons, the Presbyters joyned with the Bishop in Ordination and Jurisdiction? And if it were a Bishop with his Presbytery that did Ordain and Govern, then it is evident that the imployment is not aliene to the Presbyters place, nor above it: though they might not do it solely, because of the Bishops precedency, yet when there is no such President, it lieth all on them; see *Concil. Carthag.* 4. *Can.* 3. & 22. yea *Can.* 23. it is Decreed that *Episcopus nullius causam audiat absque præsentia clericorum suorum, alioquin irrita erit sententia Episcopi, nisi Clericorum præsentia confirmetur.* And for the Bishops power over Presbyters, it was so limited that the same Council ordains, *Can.* 29. that if a Bishop shall charge a crime on a Clergy man, or Lay man, he shall be put to prove it at a Synod. And *Can.* 30. If the Judges of the Church gave sentence in his absence, whose cause was tried, the sentence shall be void; and the Judges shall also answer at a Synod for their fact.] And *Can.* 34. A Bishop sitting was not to suffer a Presbyter to stand.] And *Can.* 35. The Bishop was to sit higher in the Church, but at home let him know that he is a Collegue of the Presbyters.] And *Can.* 37. The Deacon must know himself to be a Minister or Servant, as of the Bishop, so of the Presbyter.] Yea *Can.* 68. It is decreed that [*Ex pœnitentibus (quamvis sit bonus clericus) non ordinetur. Si per ignorantiam Episcopi factum fuerit, Deponatur à Clero; quia se ordinationis tempore non prodidit fuisse pœnitentem. Si autem sciens Episcopus ordinaverit talem, etiam ipse ab Episcopatus sui ordinandi duntaxat potestate privetur.*] Here you see that one that is unjustly Ordained by the Bishop may be Deposed by the Clergy:

fix Biſhops, *Can.* 11. and a Deacon by three. And afterward when Biſhops yet grew higher it was Decreed in *Conc. Carthag.* 3. (confirmed in the ſixth general Council) that a Presbyter reconcile not a Penitent without conſulting with the Biſhop, except the Biſhop be abſent, or neceſſity conſtrain: So that in both thoſe caſes he might, though he had a Biſhop over him. Yea it ſeems Deacons had ſome Ruling power in the Church: For the Council of *Elibert*, *Can.* 77. decree that [*Siquis Diaconus Regens plebem, ſine Epiſcopo vel Preſbytero, aliquos baptizaverit, Epiſcopus eos per benedictionem perficere debebit.*] 10. The 38. *Canon. Concil. Elibert*, decreeth, That in caſe of Neceſſity a Lay man may baptize. And can the Objectors prove that Lay-men have in Scripture more power given them to baptize, then Presbyters to Ordain or Govern the Church? 11. The 98. *Canon* of the fourth *Counc.* of *Carthage*, decreeth, That a Lay-man ſhall not dare to Teach, the Clergy being preſent, except they deſire him.] Whereby it appears that in their abſence, or at their deſire, he might. Now I would know whether a Lay man have any better authority for ſuch Teaching, then Presbyters have for Ordaining and Government? 12. That Presbyters have Votes in Councils (which is the greater) our Proteſtant Divines at large have proved againſt the Papiſts. See Dr *Sutlive de Concil. cap.* 8. ſo very many more. 13. The Epiſcopal Divines do affirm that the Apoſtles themſelves having planted Churches, and Ordained Presbyters in them, did retain the Epiſcopal power in their own hands. Now I would fain know, when *Paul* is ſo long in *Epheſus* and the adjoyning parts of *Aſia* (above three years) and ſo long at *Rome* &c. Who did Govern the Churches that while, from which he was ſo far and ſo long abſent? Were they ungoverned? or did another Biſhop Govern them? Or rather did the Presbyters, whom the holy Ghoſt had made their Biſhops or Overſeers? And have not Presbyters now the ſame Office? 14. I would know, if a Presbyter, as ſuch, may not Ordain or Rule, whether to enable him thereto, and make him a Biſhop, he muſt have a further Ordination? If no: then it ſeems, that the firſt Ordination which made him but a meer Presbyter, gave

I muſt entreat the Reader to remember, that I am all this while neceſſitated to go upon the Grounds which the Epiſcopall Divines will own, and to cite only thoſe Authours or Canons which are of force with them, becauſe I am only proving that there is nothing in our *Worceſterſhire* Agreement that is contrary to their principles, or that muſt neceſſarily exclude a Proteſtant Epiſcopal Divine from our Aſſociations. And therefore to argue againſt any of their opinions, would be contrary to my ſcope; And to have cited *Calvin*, *Beza*, *Chamier*, *Paræus*, *Muſculus*, or any of thoſe multitudes of forreign Divines that are known to be againſt them, would have been labour in vain; and ſo it would have been to have cited *Reynolds*, *Whitakers*, Dr *Humphrey*, and ſuch like at home, who are ſome known to be againſt them, and ſome no faſt friends to them.

If any after all this ſhould require an account of my own judgement about the neceſſity of Ordination, I ſay, I am not now about ſuch a buſineſſe, nor do I account it ſeaſonable to ſay any more then this: 1. God hath determined that every Church ſhall have a Paſtor or Paſtors. 2. And he hath ſtated the nature of their office and degree of their power. 3. And he hath deſcribed the perſons that he will have to be the Officers by their requiſite qualifications. All this is done in his Laws already. 4. There is nothing therefore left to be done but to determine which are the individual perſons that are fitteſt according to Gods deſcription. This God himſelf alſo will do, but hath not tied himſelf to one way in doing it: In generall, ſome ſign of Gods will that this is the man muſt be had; At firſt in calling the Apoſtles his own immediate nomination was the ſign. Now the moſt notable ſign is the moſt eminent unqueſtionable Qualification of the perſon, which when God conferreth ſo notably or diſcernably, that man muſt be taken as choſen by God, and they that reject him do ſin: Theſe Qualifications lie both in Abilities, Willingneſſe, Conveniency of habitation, or other externals and intereſt in the people; and if God

(and so cannot null it) but is wholly null, their ordination is *ipso facto* null, as being against Gods will; for God gave them power only to ordain those that were fit and so qualified, and forbad them to ordain others. Also if the Qualification and fitneſſe of the perſon be eminent; the people are bound to ſee Gods choice, and to accept that man of themſelves without Ordination rather then an inſufficient man ordained. For as *Cyprian* ſaith, *Plebs obſequens præceptis Dominicis & Deum metuens, a peccatore præpoſito ſeparare ſe debet, nec ſe ad ſacrilegi ſacerdotis ſacrificia miſcere: quando ipſa maximè habeat poteſtatem vel eligendi dignos ſacerdotes, vel indignos recuſandi; Quod & ipſum videmus de divina autheritate deſcendere, ut ſacerdos plebe præſente, ſub omnium oculis deligatur, & dignus atque idoneus publico judicio ac teſtimonio comprobetur, &c. Et ſit ordinatio juſta & legitima quæ omnium ſuffragio & judicio fuerit examinata.*] That which I eſpecially note is the firſt words, that God leaves neither Biſhops at liberty who to ordain, nor people whom to chooſe, but hath ſo deſcribed to them the perſons, that if they groſſely erre, their action is null: and therefore the people themſelves are bound to caſt off a wicked, or utterly unfit Paſtor, though all the Biſhops in the world command them to receive them (as in the Arrians time ſome did) And on the contrary they are bound to chooſe the fitteſt againſt the Biſhops minde, if he would thruſt an unfit one upon them. And in ſuch a caſe there is ſufficient ſignification of Gods will that [This ſhould be the man] and then want of Ordination cannot null his calling, if he had none at all: For where there is no place for controverſie there is no need of a Judge: And where God eminently qualifieth one man, and leaves another utterly unfit, there ſhould be no controverſie which ſhould be the man. And that Judgement which is committed to Ordainers is limited, and it is directed by Gods Laws, which it may not paſſe or contradict. If it do notoriouſly, the ſame Law commands the people not to obey man before God. Alſo this Power is given to certain ends: and if it be uſed againſt thoſe ends, ſo that either the ends or that means muſt be forſaken, it is eaſie to ſee that it is means and not the ends. For the means are not alwaies the ſame, God having ſtore if any one fail. Eſpecially the means is of poſitive

morality,

ped: It is necessary that there be Ministers for this use. It is necessary that these men be godly, able and willing. It is true that able Pastors be Judges who these be, lest unfit men creep in by deluding the people. But this is but in order to the former as the end. If therefore a Bishop or Pastor, or whoever shall appoint over a people an ungodly man, or an insufficient, this appointment is *ipso facto* null, and obligeth not the people: Nay, God hath already obliged them to worship him publiquely, &c. and therefore they are bound to choose a man unordained to this work rather then not perform it: and in so doing they obey God in choosing him whom God hath designed, and he is a true Pastor. For as *Cyprian* saith, (*Ubi sup. Epist.*68. p. 200,201.) with the whole Synod, [*Desiderio vestro non tam nostra consilia quam divina præcepta respondent, quibus jampridem mandatur voce cœlesti, & Dei lege præscribitur, quos & quales oportet deservire altari, & sacrificia divina celebrare*, &c. *Quæ cum prædicta & manifesta sint nobis, præceptis divinis necesse est obsequia nostra deserviant; nec personam in ejusmodi rebus accipere, aut aliquid cuiquam largiri potest humana indulgentia, ubi intercedit & legem tribuit divina præscriptio.*] So that in truth God doth all in conveying the Ministeriall power (as *Spalatensis* proves of the very Magisterial) yea, he doth by his description and qualifications choose the person, and only require men to accept him whom he hath designed, by discerning and observing the signes of his Will in the nomination. And mark, that seeing all that God leaves to man is no more; therefore Ordination and Election do not so much differ as some think; both being but the Ministerial determination of the person: And therefore it being proved easily that Overseers of the Church are the stated Ordainers, it follows that they are the Principal Choosers; unless you will cross Scripture in making Ordination to be but a meer empty Ceremony. The people indeed must (*necessitate naturali ad finem*) consent; but that's not Election strictly. Or if they first propound the man, yet they do not Determine of him Authoritatively: that is the Church-Officers or Governours part: But if he cross Gods Word palpably by *male*-administration, the people have *Judicium discretionis* (as

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he makes an Army of Commanders, that when they finde their Commanders Traitors, and see they would deliver them up to the Enemy, doth tell them they ought to forsake those Commanders in obedience to their Soveraign, and obey the next that is trusty, or (if none be so) choose another till they have further orders: Nay, it is hard trusting the guidance of that man again that hath once betraied us and the Church: And therefore those Bishops in *England* that set up Drunkards and sottish Readers, and cast out such as *Ames, Parker, Bains, Bradshaw, Brightman,* with multitudes, such as *England* was not worthy of; yea, that cast out the conformable so fast, as if they had presently been destroying the Preaching of the Gospel, I say, these have so apparently falsified their trust, that (if we were fully resolved for Bishops, yet) we cannot submit to them for Ordination or jurisdiction. The *Concil. Rhegiens.* decreed [*Ut perversi Ordinatores nullis denuò ordinationibus interfint*] Where then shall we have a Bishop to ordain of the old accused Tribe? Also they decreed [*De remotione ejus quem ordinare perperam duo præsumpserunt.*]

But then who shall be encouraged or allowed publiquely to preach without disturbance, of this the Magistrate is the Judge. Of the businesse of Election, see *Grotius* very right *de Imperio sum. Pot. cap.*10. specially *pag.*239. *Ne Plebi invitæ Pastor obtrudatur, & simul salvo summis potestatibus jure rescindendi electiones, siquid fortè in Ecclesiæ aut Reipublicæ perniciem erratum sit.* As *David, Solomon,* &c. did exercise such power: By all this it may be discerned that our Churches, Ministers, and Administrations, cannot by Papists or Seekers be justly questioned for want of succession of right Ordination; no, not though they had not had so much as a Presbyter at first to ordain them. And yet we maintain the usefullnesse and need of just Ordination. But I have been farre longer then I intended upon this Point.

The last Objection that I am to answer is this; Many of our people will not joyn with us, except they may have all Administrations as

and therefore that we will have communion with none but such as may be, do associate with us, do constantly deliver the Lords Supper to the people kneeling, who think it most suitable to the state of their flocks.

2. I beleeve there is no example of such a course of chooſing Paſtors in any age of the Church, for the people to agree with them before-hand to do as they would have them in every geſture or other circumſtance, or elſe they will not own them or communicate with them.

3. It is contrary to the office of Paſtors and duties of people. For they are to chooſe a Paſtor to guide them, and not to be guided by them. Yet we acknowledge the people muſt not follow a Paſtor in known ſin. But then they muſt manifeſt it to be ſin, Therefore I adde.

4. There is no Paſtor among us but will be ready to give an account, and offer ſatisfaction to any of his people, concerning any miſcarriage or male-adminiſtration. For we have engaged our ſelves to be ſo accountable before our Brethren of the Aſſociation. And if our people do reſt on the judgement of other men, we ſhall be ready to debate the caſe with any man that they ſhall bring: Either to receive ſatisfaction, or to give ſatisfaction.

5. How impoſſible is it according to theſe mens principles to keep our Churches in Unity? For when many parties be of many mindes, and ſome will have praier on the Books, and others without, ſome will have one way of adminiſtration and ſome another, a Miniſter cannot pleaſe all: Either therefore they muſt yield that he be their guide in their worſhiping of God, as to Circumſtantials, or elſe they muſt break in peeces about every circumſtantial difference.

6. Would you ſubmit if all the Biſhops had adviſed or required you to forbear kneeling at the Sacrament? If not, it ſeems you think it neceſſary of it ſelf: If you would, then it ſeems you take it for indifferent: And ſhould any for indifferent things reject the guidance of their preſent Teachers, and the communion of their Brethren, and the Ordinances of God?

Reasons, and others think kneeling [illegible] for Reverence: I doubt not but all of us [illegible] to yeeld to the middle gesture of standing to any that desire so to receive; what further yeelding may be, I leave to every Minister to determine, according to the weight of the scruples of his people.

But if any will yet so insist on kneeling at the receiving of the Lords Supper, as that they will not joyn with Minister or people, except they may have assurance before-hand so to receive it, I shall give them my thoughts of their way in these few Questions:

Q. 1. Do not such make themselves or their leaders (on whose Authority they take up these conceits) to be wiser then the Lord Jesus and his Apostles? Christ thought it not necessary either to deliver it to his Disciples kneeling, nor yet to command that it should be so delivered. And these men it seems do judge it necessary.

Obj. Christ did not command all things necessary, but left some to the command of the Church.

Answ. Things of a standing necessity which ought to be practised by his Church ordinarily in all ages, Christ hath commanded. But things that vary according to the variation of times, places, persons, *&c.* he hath determined only in generall, and left the speciall determination to Church-Governours, to be varied as occasion requires; (As what time the Sermon shall begin, how long it shall be, on what Text, where the Congregation shall meet, *&c.*) Now I would know whether kneeling in the act of receiving have any necessity now which it had not formerly, even 1500. or 1600. years ago? Do any bring any new reason of its necessity? I know of none. The common reason is [We cannot serve God too reverently] And was not that reason as forcible then as now? both when Christ was visibly present, and afterward when the Church for many 100. years was possessed with as great a reverence of God as the highest pretenders now are.

Q. 2. Doth it not imply a deniall of Scripture-sufficiency to be the perfect rule of Faith and Life? the great point that differenceth the Reformed Churches from the Papists. For though it belong not

mine of that which is of [illegible] can give any reaſon why Chriſt ſhould not have commanded kneeling at the Sacrament as well as a Counſel or Biſhop, if it be a matter ſo ordinarily neceſſary as is pretended?

Q. 3. Do not theſe men make themſelves wiſer then all the Churches of Chriſt for many hundred years after Chriſt? For it is certain, that for ſo long the Church uſed not to receive kneeling; Proved, 1. In that for a long time the Sacrament was received with their Love-Feaſts conjunctly. 2. For longer time the Churches would not ſo much as kneel in praier on the Lords Day; much leſſe in receiving the Sacrament. Yea, they accounted it a hainous offence to kneel in praier, and made many Canons againſt it in ſeverall ages. But ſome object, that as they did not receive kneeling, ſo they did not receive ſitting: For it was ſtanding, and ſtanding was then a praier-geſture, and therefore we muſt receive it in our praier-geſture now.

Anſ. 1. Will not ſtanding now ſatisfie the Conſciences of theſe men, when they think that all the Primitive Churches did but both pray and receive ſo? 2. When will theſe men prove what they affirm, that it was ſtanding and not ſitting that was the geſture then uſed in Receiving? Why, they ſay, becauſe it was ſtanding that was then commanded in the publique worſhip. *Anſ.* But they ſhould prove that it was in all worſhip: and not in Prayer and Praiſes only. How come ſo many Canons about the Order of Presbyters, Deacons, *&c.* ſitting? Indeed they did keep the Lords day as a day of thankſgiving, as being in commemoration of the greateſt mercy that the world hath received, even Redemption by Chriſt: And therefore partly in commemoration of his Reſurrection, partly to avoid all ſignes of dejection (which were thought unfit on daies of Thankſgiving) they commanded ſtanding in Prayer (not at Sacrament) as judging ſitting too unreverent, and kneeling unſutable to the ſolemnity and rejoycing of the day: ſo that it was in oppoſition to kneeling that ſtanding in Prayer was required. And therefore the ſame Councils forbad Faſting on the Lords day as a haynous ſin, and many Fathers made it a mark of the true Churches and Chriſtians

not

[illegible] So that [illegible] Or if they could, [illegible] that was the Prayer-geſture? I cannot ſay to the many Authors. Only thus much. 1. It appears by their Love-Feaſts, at which they ſate, that they did not ſtand in all the ſervice of that day. 2. *Juſtin Martyr* ſaith, *Apol.*2. [After this we all Riſe and offer Prayers, *&c.*] And is it not plain then that they ſate before they roſe? and that ſtanding was but the Prayer geſture in ſtead of kneeling? 3. The injunction is expreſly [for ſtanding, and not kneeling] as oppoſite. I can ſhew them where it's ſaid [*Die Dominico jejunium nefas dicimus; vel de Geniculis adorare*,&c.] *Tertull.* (if it be his) *de Coron. Milit.cap.*38. Let them ſhew the like againſt ſitting at the Sacrament.

But what if this had been ſo? Had it not been as good an Argument to ſay, Standing was their Hearing-geſture: and ſitting is ours: therefore we muſt Receive ſitting becauſe it is our Hearing geſture.] And is it not a better Argument then either to ſay [Sitting was their eating Geſture (and among them where Chriſt adminiſtred it, a homelier ſitting then ours is:) and therefore we muſt take it in our Eating or Feaſting geſture: as it's certain the Primitive Chriſtians did.] It is therefore frequently by the Fathers called [a Feaſt.] *Tertull.* (*ad Uxorem li.*2. *c.*4.) cals it [*Convivium Dominicum.*] Yet will not we urge this better Argument to prove ſitting Neceſſary (but give them that deſire it leave to ſtand:) much leſs ſhould they urge a plain ſophiſme for the Neceſſity of Kneeling.

*Queſt.*4. Do not theſe men deſtroy their own Cauſe, when they would prove the Neceſſity of Kneeling, from a Neceſſity of Conformity to the Univerſal Church? Nay doth not this Argument ſhew a Popiſh heart? For it ſeems they take not all or any of the Reformed Churches of *France, Holland, Germany, Scotland*,&c. who Receive ſitting or ſtanding, to be any part of the Univerſal Church. 2. If they take not the Primitive Church for many hundred years to be any part of the Univerſal Church, then they are worſe then Papiſts. If they do, then may not we better argue [The Primitive Church did not Kneel in Receiving; therefore we muſt not] then they can argue [The Church of later times did Kneel in Receiving: therefore

dred pretended [illegible] for Kneeling, [illegible] for it (to the people) no not in the Church of Rome; but that they ſuffered it to come in as a cuſtom ſilently, that they might not be obſerved to contradict the old Canons againſt Kneeling on the Lords daies. Even as low as *Chryſoſtome*'s time, it is but [An Adoration of Chriſt at the Sacrament] that they prove. And who denieth that? We ſtill pray to him before we Receive: Adoration and Kneeling are not all one: and Adoration by Kneeling is not all one with the doing this in the act of Receiving.

Queſt. 5. Do not theſe men make themſelves wiſer then all the Biſhops and Conformiſts in *England*, who did ever in their Writings and Diſputings, maintain our Ceremonies to be things indifferent? And now they will eſteem them ſo Neceſſary, that they will turn their back on Gods Ordinances, and become Separatiſts for them?

Queſt. 6. Is it not the more inexcuſable for theſe men to turn Soparatiſts, and that on ſo ſmall an occaſion, as for a Ceremony or Geſture; in that they have both lived in an Age wherein they have ſo fully ſeen the miſchiefs of Separation: and alſo have themſelves ſpoke ſo much againſt Separatiſts as they have done? yea and ſtill do; while themſelves become the great Separatiſts, and ſo do but reproach themſelves.

Obj. It is not we that Separate: but they that deny us the Sacrament Kneeling are the Cauſe.

Anſ. So all the Separatiſts ſay, It is not long of them; and pretend that they are neceſſitated to it. But who is to be the Guide of ſacred Actions? Miniſter or People? What if we ſhould deny to give it to them that ſit? Would you think that we gave them juſt occaſion to ſeparate? Judge by former times. And yet they have more ſhew of reaſon to ſay ſo. Beſides, I have not ſeen any put away for Kneeling. But if they may approach the Table and take it with the reſt, in what Geſture they pleaſe, yet this will not ſatisfie them unleſs alſo it be put into their hands: Though it is undeniable

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Quæst. 7. [illegible] by their Guides in their own Gesture, but they must also needs Guide the Action of the Minister himself, or else they will separate? Should not he, at least, have the same liberty to administer according to his Conscience, as they expect in Receiving according to theirs? If his Conscience tell him, that he should deliver it but to the company conjunctly as Christ did, and their Conscience tell them they should take it Kneeling; why should not he be as much the guide of his own Actions, as they of theirs? If it were a duty to put it into their hands, it is his duty and not theirs; and therefore the not doing it, would be his sin and not theirs: and what need their Conscience therefore drive them from the Ordinance? else we must needs break all in pieces: For if we put it into every mans hands, then they that think we should do otherwise must depart.

Quæst. 8. Do not they that would make more duties and sins then God hath made, forget that they have enough to do already? and that they are wont to think it too much that God himself hath commanded them? and that they will leave themselves at last more unexcusable for the neglect of the duties of Gods prescribing, when they could adde so much more?

Quæst. 9. Should we not in doubtfull cases take the safer side? And is it not safer to do as Christ and his Apostles and his Church for many hundred years did, then to follow the novelties of later times? Is it not certain that where there is no Law, there is no transgression? and I know of no Law binding us to Receive kneeling: therefore for my part I cannot fear that Christ will condemn me for following his own, his Apostles and his Churches example, when he never gave me a word to the contrary.

Obj. If Christs example bind to sit, then you must also imitate him in doing it in an upper room, and but to twelve, *&c.*

Ans. 1. This Objection is nothing to our Question. For we be not affirming that sitting is Necessary, but that it is Certainly lawfull, and that Kneeling is not such a duty, as that men should refuse Commu-

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in force.

Anſ. 1. Scripture is the Churches ſufficient Rule, and the perfect Law of God. 2. Thoſe things that Scripture hath left to occaſionall determination, no Councils muſt make ſtanding Laws for to bind at all times. For if ſuch Laws had been fit, God would have made them. 3. It is the preſent Guides of the Church that are upon the place, and ſee the occaſions, that muſt determine ſuch Circumſtantials as are of mutable determination. And former Church-Governours can no more take away the power of the preſent, then they can deprive them of their Office; it being eſſentiall to the Office of every Paſtor to be a Guide or Ruler of his Flock. 4. If you think that all Church-Canons (yea though it be General Councils) bind, then you are bound to Contradictories: for one Council hath oft croſſed another. And Papiſts themſelves diſclaim many things enjoyned by Canons. The 16. Canon of the 4. Counc. of *Carthage*, requires Miniſters not to reade the Books of Heathens: Doth this bind now? Many the like might be mentioned. 5. If you will needs take your ſelves bound by Canons, I pray you tell me whether the Canons of a few Biſhops in *England* of late, ſhould bind againſt the Canons and conſtant practice of the Primitive Church, and of the Apoſtles themſelves? They forbid Kneeling on the Lords day; and the Apoſtles practiſed ſitting at Sacrament; and either our late Canons are Null for contradicting the former which were of greater authority; or elſe neither are binding. 6. According to their own grounds, our Biſhops had no power to make Canons, both becauſe they were no Biſhops, for want of a ſucceſſive true Ordination, and becauſe they had made themſelves uncapable. Even the matter of our Biſhops Election, according to many Canons, made them uncapable of ever being Biſhops more. The fourth Can. *Concil. Aurelian.* Decrees, not only that the Clergy and people muſt conſent, but that if their conſent were but forced (or they inclined) by the oppreſſion of thoſe in power, that Biſhop ſhould be depoſed *for ever*, as coming in more by violence then by lawfull Decree.] Now how our Engliſh Biſhops came in, I had rather their friend *Grotius* ſhould tell them then

[illegible] eligendi [illegible].] About which he cites *Durand. Bellarm.* &c.

1. The Doctrine of *Grotius* against a Legiſlative Power in the Church, you heard before. The Doctrine of the Church of *England* you may finde, *Artiel.6. & Art.* 22. The words are theſe [Holy Scripture containeth all things neceſſary to ſalvation: ſo that whatſoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it ſhould be believed as an Article of the faith, or to be thought requiſite or neceſſary to ſalvation.] And *Art.*22. [When (General Councils) be gathered together, for as much as they be an Aſſembly of men whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God, they may erre, and ſometime have erred, even in things pertaining unto God: Wherefore things ordained by them, as neceſſary to ſalvation, have neither ſtrength nor authority, unleſs it may be declared; that they be taken out of holy Scripture.]

It were tedious to cite what Proteſtant Epiſcopall Divines ſay to this point. I will only cite one, D. *Sutlive de Concil. l.2.c.3.* Where he laies down this Poſition, [*Non omnia conciliorum decreta de ſacris Eccleſiæ miniſtris, & eorum Officiis Eccleſiæque Ceremoniis & Ritibus, Chriſtianos neceſſario ligare.*] *Prob.* 1. *Non ligant quæ novas inſtituunt Dei colendi formulas,&c. At in actis Conciliorum multa ſunt ejus generis decreta. Quis ergo Chriſtianus contra Chriſtianæ libertatis leges eis ſe obligari ſinat?* 2. *Non ligant,idque multo magis, quæ repugnant verbo Dei,&c.* 3. *Non erant imponendæ leges oneroſæ ſuper cervices Chriſtianorum*, Mat.11. Act.15. *Hujuſmodi ergo oneroſas leges excuti poſſe,nemo non videt.* 4. *Chriſtus nos liberavit à ſervitute traditionum & legum humanarum,&c.cujuſmodi plura conciliorum ſanctionibus firmantur.* 5. *Omnia in Eccleſia ad ædificationem fieri debent. Si ergo aliqua Conciliorum ſtatuta ſcandalo ſunt Chriſtianis,tolli debent. Si laqueum injiciunt conſcientiis, diſſolvenda ſunt. Si inutilia eſſe deprehenduntur, & minime decora,abjicienda. Neque ſane dubium eſt quin Eccleſiæ Romanæ Canones de Ceremoniis, & Eccleſiæ Miniſtrorum cælibatu, & hujuſmodi, valde ſint captioſi & oneroſi & inutiles.* 6. *Mores Eccleſiæ Chriſtianæ oſtendunt omnia Canonum decreta licet alioqui juſta non ſem-*

pinunt,&c.] So far Dr. *Stillingfl.* Much more might be said to this Objection. Some will marvell that I lay so much to these men. Let such know that I am not of their minde that despise all the Episcopall men, as fitter to be rejected then united with. Many of them are Godly and Learned and Judicious, and deserve the chiefest room in our Associations. I was desirous also to save the ignorant from the danger which I foresee.

Lest any should misinterpret what I have here said, against these Popish Objectors, I here profess, 1. That it is far from my intent to raise any jealousies of any pious Episcopall Divines, as if they were Popish. I speak of no other, but that late Generation of *Cassandrian, Grotian* Papists, who think they can do *Rome* more service under the name of Protestants, by drawing men to Traditions and Divisions, then if they should declare themselves *French* Papists. I have partly told you how to know them. They will dispute as zealously as a Protestant against the Popes Infallibility, and his being above a General Council, but they can consent to his Primacy, and most of his Doctrines, especially against the perfection and sufficiency of the Scripture.

2. I do not speak against mens seeking a Reconciliation with *Rome*, on just and honest terms. I think it one of the happiest works in the world, could it be accomplished: And I think the *French* are the only people to be first dealt with to that end. And I long to see providence so turn things about, as that there might be a Council first of these two Nations for the attempting of such a work. And I am past doubt, that it would be the happiest way to pull down Antichrist (if the Pope be he) that hath been yet of late undertaken. But if ever such a thing be accomplished, it must be by Uniting in one Creed, as containing all things sufficient to salvation; which must be wholly taken out of Scripture, and not such as the *Trent* Confession is: Upon which Agreement they may openly acknowledge each other for Brethren and true Churches, without compelling each other to Uniformity in the lesser matters, but bearing with each others differences.

3. I ſolemnly profeſs that I have no deſire by this our Aſſociating, to advance any parties, or carnall Intereſts; but meerly that all godly, faithfull, Orthodox Miniſters, may join together, to guide their Flocks in theſe licentious daies, leſt through our Diviſions they be made a Prey. And alſo that ſo much of Diſcipline may be Unanimouſly exerciſed as we are all agreed in, leſt our Congregations be a reproach through their pollutions; and men ſhould forget the true nature of Chriſtianity, and we have all laid waſt, or overgrown with weeds, while the hedge lieth down. Nor do I pretend to an ability of aſſuring the world, whether Epiſcopacy, Presbytery or what elſe is the right way of Government: though I am more perſwaded every day, that the Truth muſt be gathered from the ſeveral parties, who each of them hold a part of it in peculiar. But my conceits in theſe matters, I have no call to open to the world yet, which I perceive not likely much to regard them, as perhaps they do not deſerve it.

Laſtly, Underſtand that it is not only thoſe that differ in Government that we deſire ſhould Unite with us: but alſo thoſe that differ in Doctrines, ſo they be ſuch as can heartily ſubſcribe our Profeſſion, and will manage their differences in Peace and Love. I need not name any parties, ſeeing it is diſcernable by our Agreement, whom we do intend.

Only let all know, That the Able, Godly, Faithfull and Peaceable of all theſe ſorts, we heartily deſire to unite with as Brethren: but the Inſufficient, Ungodly, Unfaithfull, Unpeaceable, we do diſclaim, of what Opinion, Side or Party ſoever they be.

I Shall conclude with this humble Requeſt to all my Brethren in the Miniſtry, In the Name of our great Lord and Maſter, that they would forget all former injuries and differences ſo far, as preſently to addreſſe themſelves to ſeek Peace and Reconciliation: And to that end that they would here and in all Countreys preſently enter into ſome fraternall Aſſociations; and there meekly and ſelf-denyingly to ſet themſelves with one heart and ſoul to carry on Chriſts work ſo

damentals of [illegible] Posterity curse us [illegible] hands of the Enemies? [illegible] and jealousies and perverse zeal for our several opinions, we should keep open the breach for all heresies and wickedness to enter, and make a prey of our poor peoples souls: Brethren, you see other bonds are loosed, Satan will make his advantage of these daies of Licentiousnesse: Let us straiten the bond of Christian Unity and Love, and help each other against the powers of hell, and joyn our Forces against our common Enemy. Have you not had yet time and means enough to observe how God hath been offended with your unpeaceable proceedings? seeking to oppresse and subdue each other by force, rather then to win each other by love and Evidence of truth? The Episcopall party when they were up, making that sad havock of the Church by the persecution of their brethren, which this land is like to lament yet longer: The Presbyterians when they were up, seeking their ejection too rashly, without sufficient means of satisfaction; What should I rip up the faults of others which the Sun hath seen, and the world rings of? Truly Brethren I speak it that we may all be humbled, and go weeping together in seeking the Lord with our faces *Zion*-ward, saying, Come, let us joyn our selves to the Lord in a perpetuall Covenant that shall not be forgotten, *Jer.* 50.4,5,6. I would not open our shame, were it not necessary to our humiliation and reformation: But the world knows it already. As God tels us of it, so the railing, malicious, insulting enemies tell us of it. Have not some of you led the way in secret or open vilifying, deriding, contemning and aspersing your brethren, that thereby you, even you, have been the means of raising those calumnies that you cannot allay; and have put those words into the mouths of the wicked, which they daily belch forth to the pleasing of the devil, the grieving of all lovers of holinesse and peace, and the undoing of their own souls, so bitterly and scornfully have used the name of an Independent, that the most Reverend, and Learned, and godly of that way, do with the multitude lie under such contempt, that they are the lesse capable of successeful serving God in their places; so reproachfully and contem-

pretended discoveries, and I am afraid to expresse: and when they have done to perish, that there may not be wanting a witnesse of their sin. Alas, it is past denial, that you have occasioned those hellish reproaches, which the Satanical *Mercuries* do daily proclaim in the ears of the world; So that a man of another Nation cannot reade the reports of Civill or Military affairs in *England*, or *Scotland*, but he must reade it intermixed with the Accusations, Reproaches, and Slanders of the Brethren. I will not now go so near the quick, as to meddle with matters of bloud, even the bloud of confessed Saints, in which we little thought ten years ago, that such should have had a hand, as have openly owned it to God and men: Only I will say, These things must sit close to some mens consciences: But this I would seriously have you consider, whether the fearfull danger that the Gospel and Christian cause is in this day, be not principally occasioned by your divisions, emulations and contentions? And if it should fall out (which God prevent) that Academies and Ministry be cast down, that Popery be let in, that the power of godlinesse be swallowed up by schismes and prophanesse; Will not your names be the first in the curse? Who knows not that the divisions of the Pastors leade the people into divisions? yea, and that they are as backward yet as almost any to heal them? In all this I exclude not my self; Though I can truly say, that I alway loved peace, and hated censorious dividing; yet I unfeignedly bewail (and confesse my sin before God and the world) that I did love the one and hate the other no more, that ever I did so much against peace and no more for it. O Brethren, it's we that leade the way to division that must sound the retreat, and jointly leade the way to reconciliation. We have no other way left to heal our wounded consciences, and hide our sin and shame (under Jesus Christ:) We have no other way to revive the hopes of the Churches, now they seem to be ready to gasp their last; nor yet to rescue the souls of our poor people who are some of them ready to turn Papists, as soon as liberty hath opened the door wide enough for the Priests and Jesuites to be familiar among them: and the rest of them are ready to think all Religion to be uncertain, or vain, while

[*By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one another:*] Have you forgotten the Saints charge, *If it be possible as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men.* And *Follow peace with all men?* To receive it when it's thrust upon you is not following it, and yet happy *England*, if all would do so: Alas, that ever men, that men that make so much conscience of praying, hearing, reading, Sacraments, should make no more conscience of their duties for the peace of the Church? When Christ hath so frequently, so plainly, so piercingly inculcated, Love, Peace, over and over, as he hath done, and yet that Christians, yea, Ministers do so strangely overlook them; and reade them as if they read them not: When the Lord hath placed so much of the very nature of Christianity in it, and made it so necessary to our very salvation, that yet we should passe it over so lightly, and with so little observation: O what hypocrisie! what self-condemning is it for to cry out of the divisions and schismes of the times, as most do, and when we have done to sit still when we should endeavour to heal them, and when we that have made the breach should make it up. Division and want of love is a sin that all men are ready to blame in others, and exclaim of in the generall: and yet that we should be so deeply guilty our selves, as if we had not run far enough in the guilt already: Alas Brethren, are not the effects of our sinne before our eyes which way ever we look? into City, Countrey, into Parliament that late was, and into the Army, into men of all sorts and degrees? and is it not time to return? Again therefore, I beseech you make out after Union and Reconciliation. And to that end get all together, and keep constant meetings in Associations. Most jealousies and jarrings are occasioned by strangeness and distance; When you hear men spoken evil of, and do not hear them speak for themselves. Familiarity would much further the cure of differences: Devils and wicked men can agree in evil doing, and goe hand in hand in sin; and shall not we unite in the work of God? What, we! that look to live in heaven together, and there to be employed all in one blessed work of praising the living and most blessed God? Will it do you good then to remember your strangeness and dissen-

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the work themselves, [illegible] Brethren, the more difficult [illegible] the more industriously and resolvedly should we set our selves to seek it. Difficulties that amount not to Impossibilities, should quicken and not discourage, where the work is of necessity as ours is. I seriously professe that I often wonder how men, learned men, godly men, can maintain so much seeming peace with God, and their own consciences, who do so little for the Churches peace: and how they can ever hope to die in peace that study no more to live in peace? If without holinesse here there be no hope of holinesse or happinesse hereafter, how can there be any hopes of everlasting peace to those that do not here value and pursue peace? What! Preachers of the Gospel? and yet forget their Masters name! [*The King of Salem, the Prince of Peace,*] and forget the Gospels nature and title [to be, *The message of Peace*;] and forget their own office which is to be [*The Messengers of Peace,*] and forget the title of that way which they must preach [*The way of Peace*;] and forget that it is the description of the wicked [*The way of peace they have not known*; and to forget that it is their curse [*There is no peace to the Wicked*; and to forget that great benediction of our Lord, [*Blessed are the Peace-makers,*] yea, and to forget the tenour of our finall sentence [*They shall enter into Peace*;] and the nature of our everlasting inheritance, what absurdities are all these? how inconsistent with that calling which we professe and do pretend to?

But I know there is none of us such enemies to peace, but we would be content to have it so it be upon our own terms; If all men will take up their opinions, and stoop to their wils, what men so wicked but would yield to peace? But is that seeking for it, and denying our selves for it, and closing in Christ, the common center? All that I will say more to you, shall be in these following Prognosticks, which do also intimate the impediments and difficulties, and do point out our own duties.

In generall, I am confident if this be Gods season for the restoring of his Church, it will be his season also for the uniting of his people: And let all the dividers know, that they labour in vain while they think

peace.)

1. Whenever God intends to build his Church in peace, he will open the eyes of his people to ſee the neceſſity, excellency, and glory of peace, and give them ſuch deep apprehenſions of this, that they will wonder that they were before ſo blinded as to overlook it.

2. He will (to that end) make them reade more ſeriouſly and with obſervation thoſe Texts of Scripture, which before they ſlipt over and felt no force or ſavour in: ſo that they ſhall wonder how they could ſo overlook ſuch ſerious precepts, and ſuch clear diſcoveries of their Maſters will: ſuch as 1 *Cor.* 1. 10,11. *&c.* and 3. 3,4. *Rom.*16.17,18. *Phil.*3.15,16. 1 *Theſ.* 5.13,14,15. ſpecially *Rom.*15. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7. and 14. 1. *&c.* *Jam.* 3. 17, 18. 1 *Cor.* 12. 12. *&c.* *Mat.* 5.9. *Gal.* 6,1. *Rom.* 12. 9,10,15,16,17,18. to the end. O that theſe few verſes of this Chapter were but conſcionably practiſed even by the eminent Leaders of the Flock of Chriſt.

3. When God will do this great work, he will wonderfully convince his people of the ſinfulneſſe of their diviſions, and of that perverſe emulation and zeal which they were wont to entitle God himſelf to, and to glory in as a part of their chiefeſt duty: They ſhall no more reproach one another, and lie vilifying their Brethren behinde their backs, and one ſay [It's all long of theſe Independents,] and another [This we may thank the Presbyterians for,] and a third [The Prelaticall Conformiſts did all this: But they ſhall ſee that we were all too blame, and every man ſhall acknowledge his unpeaceable miſcarriages, and heartily lament them before the Lord, and loath themſelves for all their emulations.

4. Yea, when God will do this work, he will make his people feel an indiſpenſible obligation lying on them, to ſeek peace, and purſue it; ſo that they ſhall be no more able to reſt with quiet conſciences till they have ſent to one another, confeſſed their miſcarriages, and deſired reconciliation and conſtant Aſſociations for the unanimous carrying on the work of Chriſt, then now they can reſt in peace of conſcience without Preaching, Praying, or any other duty.

5. Yea, God will poſſeſſe them with ſuch a Love to Peace, and

daies, and also before [illegible] against Bishops and Ceremonies, ſo that they certainly proſecuted their work till it was accompliſhed, ſo ſhall the Reformers of the Church be as zealouſly ſet for the Reconciling of differences, and the union and aſſociation of Paſtors and of Churches.

6. Yea God will raiſe in his people ſuch deep apprehenſions of the hainous wickedneſs of dividing principles and practiſes (which are now accounted acts of piety) that they ſhall not make a light matter of them any more: But Chriſtians ſhall think and ſpeak of Diviſions and Emulations, and breaking into parties, as now they think and ſpeak of Theft, Whoredom, Murder, or ſuch like.

7. Yea God will cauſe his people to deteſt the very Names of Diviſion, and lay them by as occaſions and badges of our diſagreement. And I think *Epiphanius* and *Auſtin's* and others long Liſts of Hereſies will not be in ſo good eſteem as they are at this day. For though the ſchiſme will be more abhorred, yet it will not be every ſuch difference in Judgement, as ſome of theirs, that will be taken for a ſufficient ground to call a man a Heretick.

8. Moreover, when God will reſtore his Church, he will give meek and humble ſpirits to his people, and take down much of that pride which now cauſeth and continueth our Diviſions: Thoſe proud men that now value their Reputation and carnall intereſts before the Churches Unity, and Reformation; that ſo value their own underſtandings, that they think contemptuouſly of other mens; ſhall then be low in their own eyes, and prefer their Brethren before themſelves. The pride of Chriſtians, eſpecially of Miniſters, is now the main impediment to our Union: This curſed ſin makes men look with an envious eye at every Brother that is eſteemed above them, and (as they think) doth cloud them in the eyes of the people: It makes Miniſters ſeek after applauſe, and makes them impatient of ſlighting and diſeſteem: And while they are ſtriving who ſhall have the greater party, they are engaged in Diviſion before they are aware: For-

getting

ſelves ſhould be deemed an honourable leading in it: or as if they had rather Chriſts work ſhould be undone, then done without them, or contrary to their conceits. God will turn this deviliſh diſtemper into humility and ſelf-denial, when his work ſhall be done. He will make his people baſe in their own eyes, and glad to be ſlighted, vilified and laid by, ſo it might but conduce to the Unity and Peace of the Church, and the furthering of Reformation. As *Clemens Roman. ad Corinth.* ſaith, *pag.*69 [He therefore that is ſtrong, mercifull, full of charity among you, let him ſay, [If it be for me, that Sedition, Contention and Diviſions ariſe, I will depart, I'le be gone whither you will; I will do what the people command me, ſo be it that the Flock of Chriſt may live in Peace with thoſe Presbyters that are ſet over them.] He that ſhall do this, will win himſelf much honour in the Lord; and every place will gladly receive him.]

9. Yea God will cauſe men to abhorre that cenſoriouſneſs of their Brethren, and thoſe ſecret deſires to deſtroy their reputations, which are the fruit of this Pride. So that they who now are queſtioning every mans ſincerity that doth not pleaſe them, and making the worſt of every mans actions and ſpeeches, ſhall then cover mens infirmities by that charity which thinketh not and ſpeaketh not evil, which envieth not, and is not puffed up: And they ſhall be ſo conſcious of their own faults and frailties, as that it ſhall conſtrain them to tenderneſs and compaſſion on their Brethren, and to judge the beſt till they know the worſt; and they ſhall learn to hear a cenſurer and backbiter with as much indignation as now they hear a ſwearer or a lier.

10. Yea God will take them off from all their engagements to parties, and let them perceive that the very names of parties are a diſhonour to the Church; and that Chriſtians ſhould not think of a party, but as a man thinks of his wounds; with ſmart and ſorrow.

11. Alſo when this bleſſed work of healing ſhall be wrought, God will ſhew his people the ſinfulneſs of that zeal for inferiour particular opinions (true or falſe) which makes them think that they ought to do many things againſt the Churches Unity and Peace. He

lower Conformities [illegible] in their opinions [illegible] the rest of mankinde, [illegible] and not contemn, cast off, or divide from those that differ from them.

13. For God will let men see that it is the substance of Christianity that Christians must Center and Unite in; and he will teach them to take those for Brethren that hold that substance, though they differ in several inferiour things.

14. And God will teach his people to be hereafter less cruel and proud, then to impose new Articles of faith upon their Brethren; and to put their own Interpretations into their Creed: He will teach men to be more mercifull to the Church then to load her with Canons and Constitutions of men, containing unnecessary dividing determinations; and seeking to force all to their obedience.

15. For whenever God intendeth Peace and Unity to his Churches, he will cause men freely to give his Word the honour of its sufficiency, and to take it for a perfect Rule of Faith and Worship; as that which hath left nothing undetermined which was fit for a stated universall determination: And therefore men shall see the vanity, yea the sinfulness of mens undertaking to determine by Canons what God thought not fit to determine in his Laws: except only for the occasional determining of that in particular which God hath determined only in generall, and directed man by his Rules how to determine in special: which therefore must not be by a fixed universal Determination (for then God would have done it himself) but by a temporary determination, to be changed as occasions shall require; and therefore in most things to be left to the particular Church-guides, who are upon the place, and imployed in the work. Also God will teach men to take the Scripture for sufficient in matter of Belief: and to screw men no higher, not adding their supernumerary Articles, as the Council of *Trent*, no nor putting a word among their Fundamentals as necessary which is not in the Scripture. What hope of Union when there is no Uniting Rule or Center agreed on? And can the Papists, or any other over-doing zealots, imagine, that

ever

Unity, are these times of Warre, when mens ears are filled with a contrary noise, and their minds alienated, exasperated, and filled with jealousies. If men do think that in any forreign Churches there be any thing amiss; how much more Christian a course were it, and probable to succeed, to debate the case in peace, then to fight with them? 2. It is an unlikely time for agreement, when one party is in prosperity and power, and thinks he can have his will without condescending to a loving Christian debating of our differences: Mans proud corrupt heart, will hardly be taken off from the using of his carnal weapons and advantages: but will think that God puts such power and opportunities into his hand, for the promoting of his particular opinions and waies, by force, and not by satisfying the unsatisfied. 3. Another disadvantage is, ignorant or wicked Magistrates in the Sovereignty: who either understand not the waies of the Lord, or else hate them, and would undermine them; either, as *Julian*, by giving every party a liberty of contending, and of publishing their delusions, and denying openly the Foundation; and working on the poor people, who are usually easilier taken with confident speeches then with solid reasonings: Or else (on the other extream) to use a foolish violence, with those that dissent in inferiour things; and to become a discouragement to true piety and tenderness of Conscience. The later we have felt formerly; the former we have felt lately; and fear yet more. But what God may yet do upon this change of our Government, we cannot tell: Let all that love the Churches Peace and welfare pray, That our Rulers may avoid these two destroying extreams, of giving *too much* Liberty, or *too little*.

You see, Brethren, there's many things to be done, and great changes to be made on the hearts of the best, before the Church of Christ is like to be restored by Unity and Peace. Yet God can do all this in a moment, when his time is come. O set to the work, that we may see that our deliverance is at hand. I think you have now as fit a season in one respect, as ever you had: When you had the advantage of superiority and secular Power, your ears were stopt, your hearts

will look back on your proud Divisions with shame and sorrow.

I do therefore in the Name of Christ intreat, not only the people of this Congregation to Unite, but all the Godly, Able Ministers in this County to Affociate without any of what Party soever they have been. And I do let them know, that we are not so setled in our present Opinions of Waies, but that if they see any thing amiss in our Agreement or our courses, we shall be ready to hear any thing that can be said for our Information and alteration. And if the zeal for their own Parties and Waies should keep them off, let me advise them to be more zealous for the welfare of the Church in generall, and *to take heed least our divisions do prepare our people for Popery, or fasten them in ungodliness*: and I dare assure them, *That if Episcopacy, Presbytery or Independency, &c. be indeed the Way of God, then is no Way in the World so likely to set it up, as the Uniting and loving Association of the Pastors; where all things may be gently and amicably debated.*

And I desire that our Brethren in other Counties would take the same course: Not that I dare urge them to unite just on the terms of our Propositions or Profession, if they have better before them. Yet I will say this: That I admire Gods good providence in facilitating our consent herein, so happily in this County: and that it will be found, upon trial, a matter of great difficulty, to bring even Wise and Godly men to agree on the drawing up of Forms: and I seriously profess, that if I had known where to have found but this much done to our hands, I would not have consented that any of us should have attempted to draw up a new and different Modell; but have the more gladly received it, because the Union would have been more full. But as soon as we see our own weaknesses or mistakes Corrected by any more perfect Way of our Brethen abroad, we shall accept their Instructions, and Correct them our selves. In the mean time, we shall rather do thus, then nothing.

Finitur Maij 20 1653.

Postscript.

HAving written, a few words of Advice to the People of those Congregations whose Ministers refuse to Associate. Either such Ministers are Insufficient or Scandalous, or they are (or seem) Able and Faithfull. If the former, I advise all conscionable people to endeavour speedily to cast them out, and not think of joyning them with us who cannot receive them. I know some will plead compassion to them; but it's cruel compassion, which for fear of bringing a mans family to poverty, will both connive at his proceeding in such hainous guilt, and at the starving, and everlasting damnation of mens souls. The devil loves such mercy as this is. If indeed you pity such, help them, if you can, to a sight of their sin, in undertaking so high a Calling, and so great a Charge, which they are so unfit for: that they may break off their sin by Repentance, and betake themselves to a work that they are fitter for. *Obj.* But may not Ministers, as well as others, be forborn upon their Repentance? *Answ.* 1. Repentance will not cure their Insufficiency. 2. It must be a very notable Repentance that must at all (much less suddenly) readmit a scandalous person into the Ministry. In the Primitive Churches, after hainous sinning, they would admit him to the Ministry no more, were he never so penitent, though they would admit him to Communion. However, let him be cast out of the Ministry, and Repent then; and if he manifest such Repentance as may satisfie the Church, let them then take him in again, there or elsewhere: But shall he therefore be trusted in his forfeited Office, where he may wrong mens souls, because when he is questioned, he pretendeth Repentance? *Obj.* But how can any other conscionably receive his sequestred maintenance, when by Law it is his? *Answ.* Is it not given him only as Pastor, for the Work of Christ, and the service of the Church? If there be 200l *per annum* allowed to each City for a publick Physician, and some ignorant Empericks get into the place, who kill more then they cure, were not he cruelly mercifull that would have these men continue to the murdering

ſhip of Worſhip, &c. and ſo be kept from the Sacrament and all that are with him, for fear of putting him out of his place, or giving his maintenance to another. I would give them Pastors better advice: and that is, That they would lament day and night, as long as they live, the heavy guilt of the blood or damnation of ſouls which they have incurred, and that ſo far as they are able, they would make the Church reſtitution of the Tithes, which for ſo many years they have ſo unjuſtly received; it being, before God, but plain Robbery; and one of the moſt hatefull kindes of Robbery that can be imagined; to ſtarve and deſtroy mens ſouls, and then to take hire for it. But enough of them.

2. But if the Miniſters that refuſe to Aſſociate cannot be proved Inſufficient, or of wicked lives, then I would adviſe all their Peaceable Godly people, to joyn together, and deſire their Paſtor to Aſſociate with his Brethren for a Unanimous carrying on the Work of God. If he yet refuſe, he will no doubt, give ſome reaſon of it: Which if he do, his people may do well to deſire him, to meet once, at leaſt, with the Aſſociated Miniſters, and give in his Reaſons to them. This they ſhould deſire, both 1. Becauſe the people may there hear both ſides ſpeak together, and ſo be the better able to judge, whether his Reaſons for Diſſent be ſufficient or not: and 2. Becauſe Chriſtianity and common charity bindes that Diſſenting Brother to manifeſt to the reſt what he judgeth to be their Errour, and ſo great an Errour that he dare not Aſſociate with them. And it is not a ſudden appearance, and ſlight caſting in ſome ſuperficial Reaſons, that muſt ſatisfie his Conſcience, or ſatisfie his people: but it muſt be a fair and full Debate of the whole buſineſs; ſuch as may be apt or ſufficient for a manifeſtation of the Truth. If after this the diſſenting Paſtor will not yet Aſſociate; the People (having been preſent and heard the Debate) may be the better able to judge, whether the grounds of his Diſſent be tollerable or intollerable; and accordingly they may know how to carry themſelves to him. Where note, that I can give no people a particular direction before hand, that will fully reach all ſuch caſes; ſeeing they are ſo diverſified by circumſtances. And therefore I would have all ſuch people as have a

Miniſter

unleſs it be fully manifeſt that he is of more painfull ſtudies, and a ſtronger judgement then all thoſe are. 2. Christ doth ſo plainly and preſſingly require Unanimity, Accord, and Aſſociation of Brethren, that he that will refuſe this ſo plain and great a duty, may well be ſuſpected the more in the reſt of his Doctrine. 3. It is more probable that that man means to play the Pope and tyrannize over the Flock, and make himſelf Lord of Gods heritage, who will do all alone, ſingularly or on his own head; then he that doth all in Unity, and is ready to give an account of all his doings to the reſt of his Brethren, and to hear what they can ſay againſt him.

But perhaps you will ask, What if we cannot get our Paſtor ſo much as to come to the Aſſociated Miniſters to give in his Reaſons of Diſſent? I anſwer, Then try whether he will entertain a Debate with ſome one or two that they ſhall ſend to him. If he will not do that neither, it is too probable, that he is ſo Proud or Ignorant, as that a People ſhould be jealous how they truſt him with the guidance of their ſouls. But yet I would not have ſuch raſhly to reject him, but firſt adviſe with the next Aſſociated Miniſters.

Queſt. But how ſhall we judge, if he do come in, whether his Reaſons be of weight or not? *Anſ.* Partly by what you hear replied to them (and therefore do not content your ſelves to hear them from himſelf alone) and partly by the evidence that they carry. He that will prove it his duty not to Aſſociate, muſt prove that there is ſome ſin which that Aſſociation would engage him to. If there be any ſuch ſin, it is either ſomething unlawfull to be ſubſcribed in our Agreement; or ſomething to be neceſſarily done in practice. Hear him therefore manifeſting and proving either of theſe. I can foreſee the vain cavils that ſome are like to uſe, by the experience I have long had of the Separatiſts arguings. Firſt, Perhaps they will tell you we have ſuch and ſuch bad Miniſters among us in our Aſſociation; and here they will aggravate all the faults of ſuch as they except againſt, as if they were notoriouſly graceleſs. To this I would deſire the Hearers to return theſe Anſwers. 1. That we have agreed to

accuſeth [illegible] favourably; and [illegible] in judging uprightly, and loving the [illegible] Servants of Christ. No Society hath all the members of equal integrity, and beyond exception. 3. Deſire thoſe Brethren that Object this but to ſearch their hearts and waies, and remember what may be ſaid againſt themſelves, and caſt the beam firſt out of their own eye; at leaſt to cenſure, as humble men, that are ſenſible of their own miſcarriages and imperfections; and how much allowance the beſt muſt have, that they may paſs for currant. 4. Tell them this, which I think, may give them full ſatisfaction: If they have any charge againſt any member of our Aſſociation, let them bring it in, and they ſhall be fully heard, and we will reject all whom they ſhall prove fit to be rejected. Can they deſire more? Will men of any Conſcience or face of common honeſty, let fly at men behinde their backs, and not bring in their charge to their faces, and hear them ſpeak for themſelves: Yea and withdraw from a Society meerly becauſe of the preſence of ſuch, whom they never accuſed to that Society? Would they be thus dealt by themſelves? If we have bad members, might not their preſence who are better, do more then their abſence to remove them, or hinder them from doing any hurt? 5. Take heed leſt out of your own mouthes you be condemned; while you acknowledge that even bad men are forwarder to Reformation and Unity then you.

They will perhaps further tell you, that we do but make a ſhew of Reformation, and we leave all or many ungodly ones ſtill in our Churches; they are even common Pariſh-Churches, compoſed of the common multitude, as they were before.

Anſ. This I have anſwered ſufficiently already: Further I ſay, 1. No mans miſ-practice is any reaſonable cauſe of excepting againſt our Agreement: The Propoſitions which we ſubſcribe doe exclude as many as I can finde any Scripture warrant for excluding. If the Objectors deny this, let them give their reaſons againſt the Propoſitions, and not againſt any mans practiſing c ntrary to them. Would any wiſe man ſay, I will not ſubſcribe Propoſitions for Reformation,

their fault in not casting him off, or else why should they divide from an Assembly for one mans male-administration? Or if all be guilty, they must be dealt with as in case of other sins, before they be rejected. If I know some of the Congregationall way that admit unfit persons into their Churches, shall I for that refuse communion with them and others of that way. 3. We are not to reject any member from our Church-communion that desires it, without sufficient cause produced against them. Let these Objectors therefore name the particular persons who have been proved unfit, and yet been retained; and not for shame, speak of our retaining Parishes, multitudes, the ignorant, the ungodly, &c. in generall, when they name no particulars. As if we must therefore condemn and punish men as ungodly, without any accusation, meerly because they are many, or because such men clamour out generall reproaches: The multitude of members is one part of the honour of Christs Churches, as the purity is another.

These Objections I therefore here answer, that people may know, they are not sufficient to warrant any Minister to withdraw from Unity. And again I do advise all godly people to consider, that it concerneth them to know the reasons of their Ministers dissent, and to be well satisfied in them: For else 1. They may be guilty of encouraging and following him in a Division. 2. It is the Churches as well as the Pastors that must be linked together by these Associations, and therefore seeing it is by the Pastors that they must (principally) preserve that Union and correspondence, the withdrawing of the Pastors, tendeth to the dividing of the Churches themselves. 3. They cannot safely trust their souls under a dividing Pastor. And let them but observe when all pretences are taken off, whether with many these prove not the true causes of withdrawing? 1. Some men are conscious of so much ignorance, that they will not joyn with Ministers, where there is like to be any trial of their parts, for fear of being shamed upon the discloſing of their weakness: In a Pulpit they may possibly seem some body; but they will not endure a closer trial. These men would do well to learn, that Christian honour is not got

2. Others you ſhall find that will withdraw and divide in meer pride of their own ſuppoſed godlineſs, and cenſoriouſneſs of others, as unworthy of their fellowſhip: Theſe are the worſt of all: So contrary is it to the true nature of Chriſtianity to be proud and cenſorious, and to ſay to our Brother, Stand by; I am more holy then thou! What ſin hath our Maſter more rebuked and ſhamed then pride and cenſoriouſneſs? There is no obſcurity in thoſe plain commands: *Judge not, that ye be not judged: Who art thou that judgeſt another mans ſervant? to his own Maſter he ſtandeth or falleth: Why doſt thou judge thy Brother? or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy Brother? We ſhall all ſtand before the judgement ſeat of Chriſt. Let us not therefore judge one another any more,* &c. *Rom.* 14.4,10,13. ſee *Gal.* 6.1,2,3,4,5.

If theſe men be godly indeed, they will be ſo humbly conſcious of their own unworthineſs and great imperfections, that they will be readier to draw back on that account, and ſay, I am not worthy to be Aſſociated with Chriſts Miniſters: rather then to ſay, Such a one is not worthy to joyn with me: (except he will come and prove him indeed one fit to be rejected.) And truly in my experience, they prove none of the beſt men themſelves, nor furtheſt from exception, who are ſo ready to condemn their Brethren as ungodly. How oft have I heard one man accuſing his Brethren as men void of grace, or thus and thus faulty: and within a few daies, heard others as deeply accuſing him, for pride or coveteouſneſs, or ignorant, careleſs Preaching, and negligent, diſorderly, raſh, empty performance of Gods work; as a man that doth but diſgrace the work of Preaching, and make men loath Gods Word, through his ill managing of it. Thus frequently do I hear men accuſed on both parts: Alas, that men conſcious of their own weakneſſes, ſhould not forbear ſuch vilifying of their Brethren! Perhaps one may excell in judgement or ſolidity, and another may excell in zeal and diligence: Muſt each therefore deſpiſe or reject the other? He is a rare man that is generally excellent.

3. Others

temptation to men that have a Family to maintain, to call themselves on a way that may lose their Maintenance. But is he fit to teach others the doctrince of Christianity, Self-denial, taking up the Cross, parting with things present for the hopes of future, &c. who will openly contradict it all himself?

Quest. But put case that the people are satisfied of the Ministers Reasons for withdrawing?

Answ. Both he and they must faithfully propound those Reasons to the Associated Brethren: 1. Else how can we that erre be rectified? 2. If they hear not both sides speak, they may easily be deluded, and satisfied in their sin.

But a greater difficulty occurres then any of these. What if a Congregation have the choice of their Pastor, and they cannot agree in chooſing, but one party will have one man, and another party will have another? How will your Union be carried on, when the people cannot agree about their Teachers? *Answ.* I confess I foresee a sad calamity like to befall the generality of the Churches in this point, if God do not wonderfully prevent it. For I finde it such a difficulty to have many men of one minde (even of the best) that I can hardly expect that ever the people should long agree in the choice of their Ministers: especially if they have divers propounded that may seem fit. For the Ancient experienced, or meeker sort of Christians will be for a man of Solidity, Judgement and Peace: The younger and the more rash, unexperienced Professors, will rather incline to a man of Zeal, who is inclined to Divide, and under pretence of further Reformation, to fall into unwarrantable separating waies. And usually, such unexperienced people are untractable, and will have their way, be it never so wrong: For passion quite perverts their judgement: and that passion is often indulged rather then suspected, because it goes under the name of Zeal. You will have also carnall superstitious persons, setting in for a man of their own stamp, to humour them; and so how many parties may there be? Especially if publique Maintenance be taken down, and people allowed to main-

It is not hard to tell what should be done: but it's hard to bring even godly men to do it. I will premise this Prognostick. That I have little hope when I have laid all, to prevail with either the wilfull, self-conceited superstitious party, or the rash youth, whose Zeal doth carry them beyond all sober, considerate, judicious proceedings. But for the sake of the rest I will tell them what must be done.

I. First it must be Resolved on, That the Church must not be divided. And therefore in all debates, keep that Resolution firm. And that Minister or party that is for Dividing, do but discover a strong ground of suspition, that their Cause is the worst. All true Pastors and Christians will be so tender of the Churches Unity, that they will try every preventing course, and wait and suffer much before they will yield to the Division of a Church. *Obj.* But if we must either consent to an unfit Pastor, or Divide, it is not long of us, but of the rest. *Answ.* There are several degrees of fitness and unfitness: If he be one that is utterly incompetent and intollerable, then you must use all right means to keep him out: and if you cannot prevail, you must further do, as I shall anon acquaint you more fully. But if he be one that is competently fit, though with many imperfections, you must do your best to have a better, but rather accept of him then Divide. The Reason is plain: God hath flatly commanded Unity, and forbidden Division: but he hath no where forbidden the Accepting of a weaker competent Pastor, to prevent such division. God hath not yet provided enough for every Church of the Abler sort, (alas, how few are they in comparison of the rest that yet are honest and tollerable!) If therefore all the weaker must be cast off, then the farre greatest part of the Churches must be unchurched, or be without any Pastors.

II. This therefore being first Resolved on, *That the Church must not divide*, you must secondly take this as certain, that *God hath not put it in the power of the people alone, to determine who shall be their Pastors,* except

Determination and Conſent in Choosing or Electing ſometimes ſignifieth only The firſt Nomination of one perſon or more that be offered, though yet there may be no Power finally to determine, whether that Perſon ſhall ſtand. Sometime is ſignified the firſt Nomination with Determination alſo. To Determine is Authoritatively and finally to decide the caſe, and ſet down, who the man ſhall be. To Conſent, is but to be Willing to have that man who is Elected or Determined of.

Now I affirm 1. Gods Word hath left it undecided, whether the people ſhall be the Electors, ſo as firſt to nominate the man that ſhall be their Miniſter, or not. The Apoſtles choſe two for *Judas* room, and left God to take one by Lot. The Apoſtles required the Church at *Jeruſalem* to chooſe ſeven men for Deacons, as ſuppoſing them acquainted with their lives, and as being loth to put any upon them, in that Office eſpecially, which medled with money matters. But for Elders (for all the ſhew from *Act.*14.23.) there is no command or any thing equivalent, that the people have the Nomination.

2. The Power of Authoritative determining who the man ſhall be, is clearly in Scripture denied to the people. For it is appropriated to the Church-Rulers, under the name of Ordaining. For καθιστημι, uſed, *Tit.*1.5. *Act.*6.3, *&c.* ſignifieth an Authoritative appointment, which is not a meer uſeleſs Ceremony (as ſome make Ordination to be, that neceſſitate the Ordainer to lay hands on him whom the people Elect) but comprehendeth the Determination that this muſt be the man. For my part I believe that it is the Church-Guides or Ordainers that have the ſole Authoritative Determination, and the people have the full and free judgement of Diſcretion, to judge whether the Ordainer have rightly determined, or not. But if that ſhould be otherwiſe, yet ſtill it is evident that ordinarily the Ordainers have a Negative voice; and that the Church cannot take to themſelves a Miniſter without them: Or elſe it would follow, either the Church-Rulers muſt Ordain whomſoever the people nominate (which is not to be imagined) Or that the people may take them Miniſters unordained (where Ordainers may be had) which is as vain a conceit.

Note

this power belong to a Church Diocesan or General Bishop, as the Apostles, or to a Presbytery, or to a single Minister of that same Church (if there be any left;) yet all are agreed that it belongs not to the People. Conclude of this therefore that the People (alone at least) cannot justly determine who shall be their Pastor.

3. Yet the Determiners or Ordainers must have the peoples Consent, ordinarily. Because the Ministeriall power compels not to obedience by outward violence: And therefore Consent is of naturall Necessity to the peoples actuall obedience. If a man set a Steward over his Family, the rest of the servants are bound to obey him, whether they chose him or no: but yet because they cannot be made to obey him against their Wils, a wise Master will chuse such a one (if fit) whom the servants will sooneſt consent to: So if a man be to send his sons to the University, he will not tell them that it is in their own power to choose themselves a Tutor; but himself will do that; and command them to obey him. But yet because they can never learn against their wils, therefore he will not (ordinarily) force them to a Tutor whom they will not consent to, if others may be had: (Though perhaps he may urge them to consent by some sharp words or dealings.) So that the Ordainers should please the people as far as may stand with their welfare, and no further.

These things being thus laid down, let me for Application, tell you,

III. Thirdly, That when a Church is at variance about the choice of a Pastor, or determining who shall be the man, *they are bound to seek the advice and determination of Church-Guides:* For seeing it belongs to them to Determine, whether there be difference or no, (by Ordaining) they must especially be sought to when there is a difference.

4. If the Ordainers or Ministers determine of a fit man, you must stand to the Determination, though perhaps another might be more fit. If the man by them determined of, be utterly incompetent, you must first prove it to them, and (if that serve not) appeal to some more General Assembly, or seek further to men more unquestionably Judicious and faithfull then they are.

5. If

[illegible] Pastors of [illegible] if he be ob-

[illegible] will stick to that man, the rest that [illegible] God make use with them, and if they be obstinate, avoid them, according to *Rom.* 16. 17. *Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them: For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies: and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.* I have seen this verified in the issue, of some that I durst not so have thought of in the beginning. Poor inconsiderate, unexperienced Christians little know what they do, when they take part with dividers, and encourage them in division. They do but strengthen their own snares. Such men fish most for themselves, even when they think themselves they are more zealous for Christ then others.

8. Were there no other remedy, rather then the Church should divide, they should (after solemn seeking God) let God himself determine it by a Lot, as *Matthias* was chosen.

If you once fall a dividing, you will give the worser part such an example, that they will presently choose themselves Teachers that will please them, and leave but few to hear or maintain a pious Ministry.

8. If the Church-Guides be so corrupted, that they all conspire to force on the people unsound, insufficient or ungodly men, then the people may reject them (as *Cyprian* adviseth them) of their own accord; as being left destitute of Christs orderly Remedy.

9. What hath been here said of the first case, may suffice to determine the other cases. If a people have two Ministers, and some would adhere to one and reject the other, and the rest adhere to him and refuse obedience to the former; in this case they should all take the advice of the neighbour Associated Pastors: For, though it be disputed, whether such Associated Ministers have any Regent Authority over a neighbour Church, yet all agree that they should be consulted and heard in order to Unity; and that's enough to the business in hand. If they can prove their Ministers fit to be ejected, let them there prove it. All Christians are bound to be accountable to

weak hand will afford [illegible] more Elders then one, and if they reject them, and supply the room with private men, they will, likely, have weaker then they reject. 3. It is not in the peoples power to reject one that is already their Teacher: except when he is utterly intollerable, and all orderly means for his ejection do fail. Prove from Scripture that any people may else reject or depose their Minister. 4. Much less may a lesser part of a Church do it, when the greater dissenteth: no nor a greater, because it tendeth to division.

If the people are unruly and will not agree; the neighbour Ministers must admonish both the said Pastors, and charge them in Christs Name that they avoid Divisions, and that themselves do heartily and lovingly close and entertain no motion to division from the people: and that will break the peoples dividing purposes, if the Pastors be but resolvedly against it, and do not secretly foment it (as commonly they do.) If either of the Pastors be resolved for Division, and reject this admonition; the godly people are bound to suspect that man, and to admonish him, and not side with him; seeing it is usually the true mother that would not have the childe divided: and an ill sign when men draw Parties and Disciples after them. And the neighbour Ministers are to admonish such a man, and proceed with him as he receiveth or rejecteth the admonition. Many differences in Judgement and Practice must be tollerated among Brethren to prevent dividing: but dividing it self is not to be tollerated: (except where the cause is just; which must be a great necessity.) What should be done with those particular persons, that will own but one of the Pastors, and yet will joyn with the whole body of the Church, which acknowledgeth both, I will not now attempt to advise; because it will be fittest to do it according to the quality of the persons, their reasons, their carriage in the business, &c. all which may much vary the case.

If it appear, that the people reject or disown a Minister for private grudges, or for crossing them in their opinions or old customs in.

[illegible] they must be the more born with (ſo they drive not to a diviſion) becauſe he gave them ſo much occaſion of offence. No humble man can violently proſecute another, for being too violent againſt his [illegible]: but will rather ſubmit to it, as Gods afflicting, humbling, reforming rod. And it's two to one, but after ſome experience of his more holy, harmleſs, diligent behaviour, thoſe very people will own him, that did diſclaim him.

Laſtly, If all remedies fail, let one of the Paſtors depart, and ſay, Let him take the living childe undivided: And the better man will likely be the readieſt to do it; according to that I before cited out of *Clem. Roman. ad Corinth.*

Let none wonder that I ſpeak ſo much on this ſubject: For if the Scripture were conſcionably obſerved, men would take Church-diviſion for a greater ſinne then Adultery or Theft. Mutinies and Diviſions do more infallibly deſtroy an Army, then almoſt any other fault, or weakneſs: and therefore all Generals puniſh Mutineers with death, as well as flat Traytors. I confeſs ten or twelve years ago, I wondered oft to finde both Scripture, and almoſt all the voluminous Writings of the Fathers in every age, to be ſo filled with exclamations and argumentations againſt Church-dividers and Hereticks: But now I know a little better the reaſon of it; and how prone, even Godly, Zealous men (eſpecially young unexperienced Chriſtians) are to it, and of what deſperate conſequence it is. Our Union is our ſtrength and beauty: Commonly they that Divide for the bringing in of any inferiour Truth or Practice, do but deſtroy that Truth and Piety that was there before. I like not him that will cure the Headach by cutting the Throat. No Maſter, no Law, no Profeſſion was ever more mercifull, gentle, meek, more for Unity, Love and Concord, then the Maſter, Law and Profeſſion of Chriſtians. O that the Lord would ſpeedily ariſe, and ſtirre up in all his people in the world, ſo mighty a Zeal for Unity

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